



The Old-House Journal

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Restoration and Maintenance Techniques For The Antique House

OLD-HOUSE SECURITY

OR How To Keep The Bad Guys Out

a thoroughly modern approach, by Margaret Miner

WHO CARE about old houses tend to put off making the changes necessary to secure a house against burglary. No one likes to think about putting bars in the living room window or an iron gate in front of a handsome panelled door. But a restored house is a tempting target, and sooner or later a burglary or attempted burglary occurs. At this point, the victim, in a panic, is apt to install major fortifications, often doing more to effectively lock himself in than to keep intruders out.

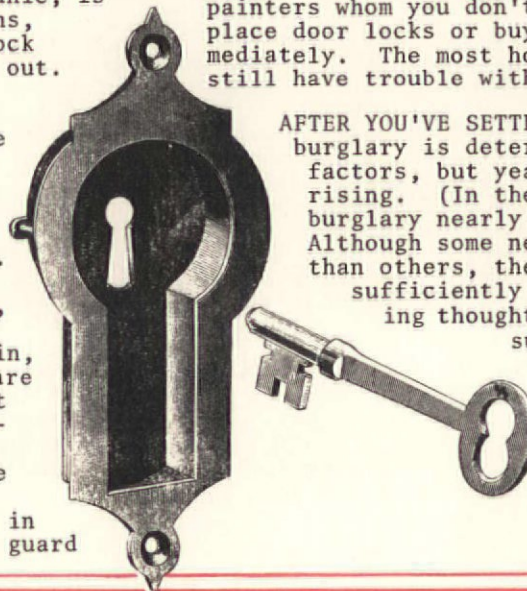
ASSESS THE SECURITY strengths and weaknesses of a newly-bought house immediately--before moving in. In neighborhoods where a lot of restoration is underway, thieves are sensitive even to the value of copper pipe and electric tools. They wait patiently for such things to be carried into a house, then they carry them out. If you work on your house before moving in, it may not be practical to take care of all the security problems right away. But do take reasonable precautions. Don't leave expensive tools in a vulnerable house. Store tools and materials in a friendly neighbor's basement. Leave a guard

dog service for a few weeks. A noisy, plausibly ferocious dog is unbeatable protection.

ANOTHER FAVORITE TIME for a burglary (from a criminal's point of view) is the first couple of weeks after people have moved in. Sometimes the culprits have been watching the house; sometimes, alas, they've been working in it. If you've given keys to builders or painters whom you don't know very well, replace door locks or buy auxiliary locks immediately. The most honest contractor can still have trouble with someone on his crew.

AFTER YOU'VE SETTLED IN, the risk of a burglary is determined by a thousand factors, but year by year it keeps on rising. (In the U.S., we have one burglary nearly every 10 seconds.) Although some neighborhoods are safer than others, the risk anywhere is sufficiently high to warrant taking thoughtful security measures. This article, however, will focus on security in urban and denser suburban areas, for the isolated house presents a special set of circumstances.

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Saving The Worn Spots

WHEN I WAS eight years old, I had a friend named Barbara who lived in a 17th-century house. That's a really old house for New Jersey, and I was always aware when we played there that Barbara's house was special. Some rooms gave me a funny feeling. It wasn't scary like a haunted house...but the feeling was spooky, nevertheless, to an eight-year-old. It felt like someone had been there before us.

THE HOUSE was a Dutch Colonial, with gambrel roof and stone walls. The functional kitchen was tucked away in a nineteenth century addition. But the rest of the house was almost untouched. Floorboards in doorways were cupped, rounded by nearly three centuries of people treading over the same spot. The central room was the oldest part of the house. It smelled different and we couldn't go there in winter because it was so cold. Barbara's room, once part of the attic, had a low ceiling and deep eaves.

MY FAVORITE PART of the house was the dark stair hall. The staircase had a massive newel; its treads were worn in the middle and sloped downward to their nosings; the steps creaked softly, as well they might, when we ran up the stairs. I can't imagine anyone wanting to silence that creak.

ANY EMOTIONAL RESPONSE I feel to words like "patina" and "character" goes back, I suspect, to that house. Whether by its own true nature or just because of the physical evidence of wear, the house--like other old houses--had a special character. Barbara's house had always been treated with sensitivity, perhaps because it was so very early. Even though some inevitable changes had been made, enough of its original fabric was left to evoke an emotional response.

IMAGINE that the Dutch Colonial, or a house of less obvious antiquity, had been neglected and had fallen into disrepair. Would new owners feel that res-

toration included smooth-sanded floors, polyurethaned to "protect" them from the dog...or flat new stair treads or an overlit stair hall for safety's sake...?

So...Don't Over Restore

OLD HOUSES link us to the past. They give us evidence that things were not always exactly as they are now; that, inevitably, time goes by. In fact, the definition of the over-used word "character" might be, simply, "evidence." Evidence of age, of past events.

AN OVER-RESTORED old house is just a new house made of used materials. Over-restoration robs a house of continuity. Even if one claims not to feel a psychic connection with the past in an old house, it's obvious that a house becomes boring as evidence is removed. There's less information left for us to "read."



WE'RE NOT all lucky enough to get a charming old house that's been treated well. Sometimes preserving what we find isn't enough; restoration of missing and damaged parts is necessary. The trick is knowing when to stop. Restoration should take a house back to usefulness, and it should arrest decay. Rescuing a part of the house shouldn't strip the character out of it.

"SAVING THE WORN SPOTS" may at times seem to contradict restoration. But it makes sense if you think of it as saving the evidence of people and years gone by.

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Old-House Living...

Restoring An 1835 Orphan *a moving story*

By Trisha Salls Griess

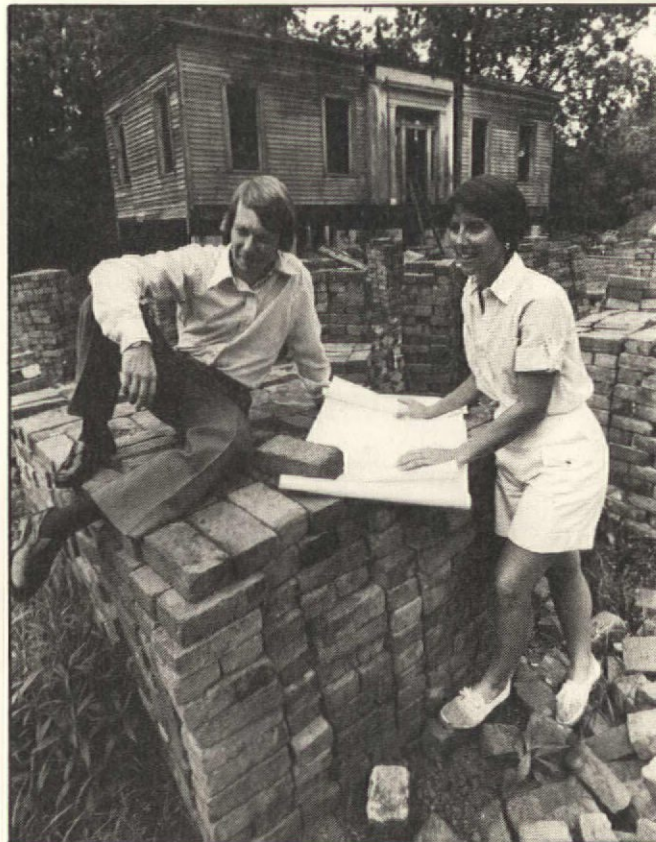
IN THE FALL OF 1976 I was taken on a tour of Greene County, Alabama, by a friend who had a passion for ante-bellum architecture. By the end of the afternoon there was only one house left to see.

I ambled through low hanging vines with my friend, not knowing what to expect. He had explained that the house was a small but unique Greek Revival raised cottage, supposedly built in 1835 by a gambler. I was only slightly familiar with architectural terminology at that time, so his description didn't really convey any distinct image.

THE HOUSE he showed me was vaguely reminiscent of a small Greek temple; even my untrained eye could appreciate its craftsmanship and unusual detail. In no time at all I was hooked ... ready to move to Eutaw (the county seat, only seventeen miles from the house), restore the house, and live happily ever after.

MY HUSBAND WALT listened in utter disbelief as I presented this proposition over dinner that evening. He cautiously agreed

to explore the situation, and after several trips to Eutaw, my plan became a reality. In January of 1977, only four months later, we moved to Eutaw and I began negotiating for the house.



Trisha and Walter Griess, their newly arrived home, and a lot of bricks

THE FIRST major complication arose when the thirteen heirs who owned the property failed to reach an agreement concerning the land under and surrounding the house. Because a meeting of minds was not possible, I decided we would simply buy the house and move it.

WE HAD SEVERAL reputable movers examine the house and the route, and they told us that the move was feasible. We settled with one mover on a fee of \$10,000 and then purchased the house--paying \$500 and promising to move it within two years. Our first concern now was to "moth ball" the house: check for roof leaks, remove all mantels and doors, and just generally try to protect it from further deterioration and vandalism.

FINDING A suitable location for the house took us one year. Dur-

ing that time we continued to ready the house for the move by taking off a 1900 kitchen addition. The real work for the move did not begin until early spring of 1978. (The house had to travel down a dirt road, and so the best time to move it was between late spring and early summer.)

THE MOVER AND I explicitly outlined which facets of the preparation stage were to be my responsibility: (1) removal of the wood lath, plaster walls, windows, shutters, and three inside chimneys; (2) taking off the porticoes; (3) taking down the brick foundation and moving the bricks from the site; (4) collapsing the roof. The mover's duties included cutting the house into two sections, jacking it up so the foundation could be moved, and, of course, actually moving the house. Upon arrival at

the new site, he was also responsible for placing the house in its new location and soundly reassembling it.

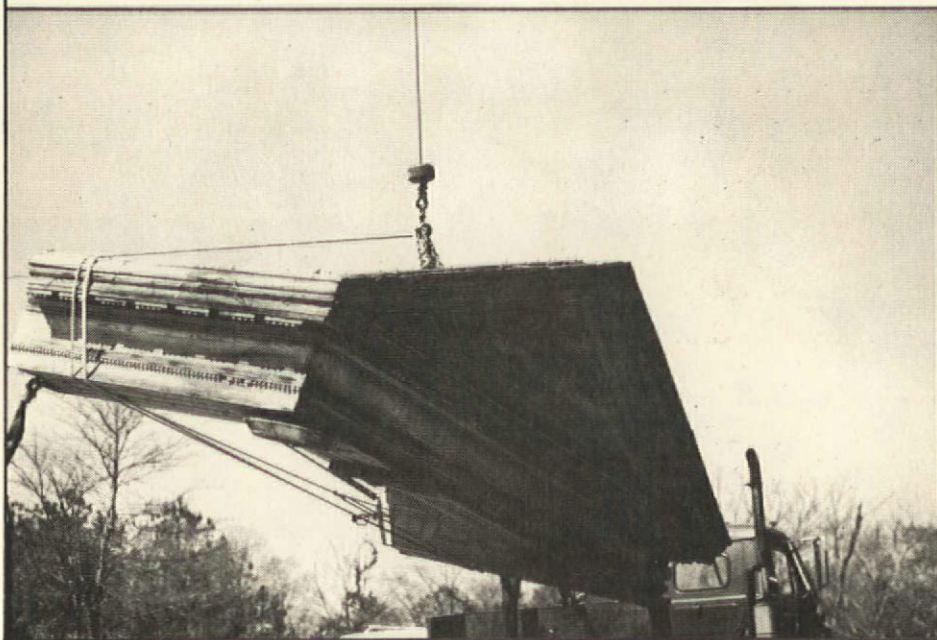
BEFORE ANY ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES were touched I made a photographic documentation of the entire house. I even took pictures of the brick foundation, with close-ups of the joints to document the type, thickness, and mortar color. In fact, I saved a small intact section of the foundation wall by wrapping it with duct tape; this proved to be extremely helpful to my brick mason.



ALL THE PHOTOS came out well, so I proceeded to hire my crew of five men. We removed all the windows and shutters, giving each room, window, and shutter corresponding numbers. Then we removed and disposed of the plaster. (We couldn't keep it because of its extreme weight and the distance of the move.) Next we removed the chimneys and built scaffolding around each chimney section inside each room. We constructed a chute of timbers, and as each brick was dislodged we slid it out, letting it land on an old couch cushion to prevent it from breaking.



Renting a crane proved to be a simple, quick, and inexpensive way of removing both porticoes.



TWO PORTICOES flanked the house, and they would have to be taken down. (Leaving them on would have made the structure too wide to be moved.) The estimates I had gotten on removing and rebuilding both porticoes were upwards of \$5000. Surveying the house I realized that the porticoes were supported by beams that ran the width of the house. I decided to try holding up the porticoes with a crane and cutting the beams where the house and portico intersected. The crane could then just lift the portico away and place it on a flat-bed truck. For \$25 per hour I hired a crane; five hours later both porticoes and all the columns were at the new site!

THE HOUSE HAD a brick foundation three bricks thick and some five feet high, as well as solid brick piers underneath it. And there were all those bricks from the chimney too. I had to devise a plan for transporting about 40,000 hand-made (by slaves) bricks with as little damage as possible. (It turned out that I was able to use all my half-bricks in walls and splash blocks.) The most efficient method was to load them by hand onto a dump truck and have them hauled to the new site and dumped at strategic

locations. The breakage in unloading was minimal, and this method avoided the cost of labor in unloading the bricks.



This photo of the disassembly of the brick foundation also shows one of the steel beams which will support the raised house. (Note the numbering of different sections of the foundation.)

WE HAD TO COLLAPSE THE ROOF because of the low power lines en route. To protect the house from the weather we held off doing this as long as we could. After removing the old tin we loosened each rafter at both ends. Then we collapsed the ridge rafter, letting each rafter lay exactly where it would go up again. (Now I realize that I also should have numbered the rafters.)

THE HOUSE WAS NOW READY to be cut by the mover. Because it was an L-shape, it was cut into two sections: The two front rooms and hall were the front section; the back room and smaller hall, the back. Steel beams were run under both sections. A cribbing system with railroad ties was used, and soon the full weight of the house was resting on the beams. Wheels were attached to the beams and the house became mobile.

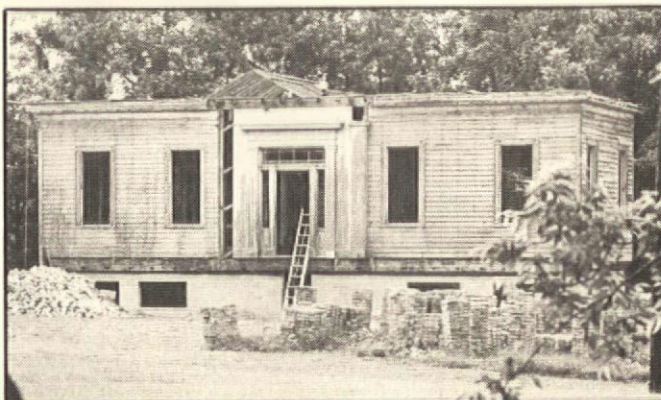
IT TOOK TWO DAYS to move each section: One day to go down the bumpy, two-mile dirt road; the second, to go the seventeen miles to Eutaw. The evening the move was completed, we had a party to celebrate and to show the people of Eutaw (who thought we were crazy) just what we were doing. Once the house was on the site the mover began a series of tricky backing maneuvers to align the house in its proper location. At this point the house looked like a very used mobile home!

THE NATURE OF THE SITE required that we hold off on

building the foundation until after the house was moved. So the two sections once again had to be placed on railroad-tie cribbing. We built the foundation with cinder blocks and faced it with the original bricks. Then the two sections were reattached--a tricky operation. The back section--now cribbed up fourteen feet--had to be gradually lowered to the level of the front section. Then the beams and joists were reconnected.

THE HOUSE WAS WITHOUT A ROOF during all this foundation and reattachment work. It was now summer, and the heat was not conducive to roofing. To avoid sunstroke, we had to work in the cooler hours of the day--which meant starting at 4:30 in the morning. The roof rafters had gotten jumbled in the move, and I soon felt as if I was playing a game of giant pick-up sticks. But with my carpenter assisting us we were able to finish the roof.

BY THE FALL OF 1978 we had the roof and foundation completed. Now we had to get the porticoes up, rebuild the porches, begin the new addition, and paint and repair the shutters. We had to build a



It does look like a mobile home, doesn't it?



A section of the Griess' house starts on its way to Eutaw.

brace to hold up the porticoes until the porches were built and the columns in place. I then called my trusty crane company, and the reattachment phase went perfectly well.


WORK ON the main structure slowed down as we started building a 1400-sq.ft. addition. It was designed to recreate the original attached kitchen, with its connection to the main portion of the house by an enclosed walkway. Because of the slope of the lot, we made the addition two-storey and included in it a family room, a kitchen, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a laundry room, and a second gallery. We duplicated the cornice work and window trim of the original portion of the house, trying to make the addition as compatible as possible with the original portion.

IN MARCH OF 1979--almost a year after the house was moved--the addition was completed and we actually moved in! We had our first child, and I began attending architecture school, so the interior of the front section was to remain unfinished for two more years. But we are now finally in the midst of Operation It's About Time: We're plastering,



About to start work

finishing the courtyard, picking out paint colors, and sanding floors.

FIVE YEARS OF HARD WORK have resulted in a house that has ceased to be an inanimate object; instead, it has become something that enhances the tone and atmosphere of our lives. Once an interviewer asked how we were able to pull the whole project together without turning it over to a general contractor. I replied, "I know that I know less, but I care more, so I do better." 

TRISHA SALLS GRIESS is a longtime OHJ subscriber. She has a BS in psychology and a Masters in epidemiology from the University of Alabama. More recently, she has attended the Mississippi State University School of Architecture. This article was written in the Law Library of the University of Alabama: "my escape from children, phones, dogs, and plasterers."



This photo shows the relocated Griess house when work was in progress. The

columns are not the originals, but replacements purchased in Troy, Alabama.



A Memorable Christmas Tree

By Joni Monnich

CHRISTMAS DECORATION was not invented by the Victorians; however, it was a custom which they enriched with their usual enthusiasm for detail. They popularized the use (and sometimes overuse) of greenery: ivy, mistletoe, evergreen, and especially holly. They also established the tradition of Christmas cards.

AND WHAT ABOUT the Christmas tree or, as Dickens called it, "The pretty German toy"? It was in 1841 when Prince Albert imported trees from Germany that the fashion really caught on. The trees were illuminated with small wax tapers on every branch and laden with sparkling little trifles, to be presented as mementoes to the guests of the Christmas party. Usually these consisted of bonbons, preserved and real fruit made artificially dazzling with gold leaf, dolls, toy watches, Santa Clauses filled with sugar plums, and miniature furniture made from wood or tin, exquisitely detailed. Just before the tapers were completely burnt out, all the guests assembled around the tree, and the souvenirs were taken off the tree and given to the person whose name they bore.

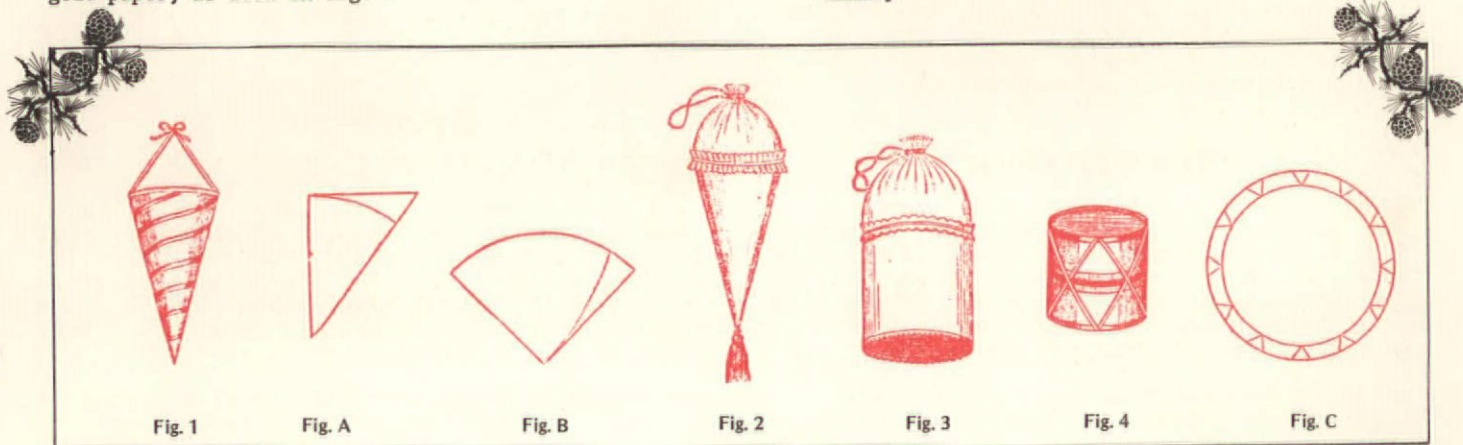
TO HELP YOU celebrate Christmas in the true Victorian style, here are a few ideas on decorating your Christmas tree. Brightly colored ornamental boxes for gifts or sweets were usually hung from the tree. To make a cone as seen in Fig. 1: Cut squares of white or colored paper. Fold the square in half like Fig. A and cut off the piece at the top, making the two sides equal. When open it will resemble Fig. B. Apply glue to the paper as far as the dotted line and join it, being sure that there is not a hole at the point. If you used white paper, then cut thin strips of red, green, and gold paper. Edge the top of the cone with gold, and paste strips of red, green, and gold around it, spirally, like Fig. 1. If using colored paper, use strips of gold, white, and a contrasting hue. To elaborate this cone, try using green satin paper to form the cone as described before. Fasten a scarlet tassel at the point. At the top, glue a piece of scarlet velvet or satin with a mouth, like a bag. Cover the joining of the cone and the material with a piece of gold lace placed over a strip of gold paper, as seen in Fig. 2.

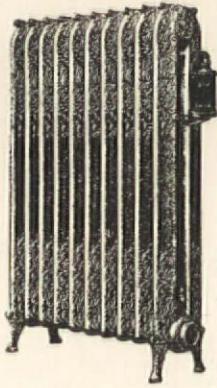
ANOTHER TYPE of box is seen in Fig. 3: Cut a straight piece of cardboard out and sew it together to make it round like a drum. Cut a circle of cardboard to fit one end. Cover the sides with paper (colored or white), notch the paper edge at the bottom, generously apply glue and turn the edges down over the circular piece fitted in. (If placing something heavy in the box, you may wish to sew this section together). Cut a piece of colored or white paper to fit onto the bottom. Place a bag top of contrasting shade of silk or satin at the top with a pretty piece of lace, passementerie, or gilt paper over the joint. One example of color would be to make the box straw-colored and the bag, blue satin. For the more creative, a garland can be drawn in watercolors around the "barrel." This would be especially nice if filled with a sachet of sweet-smelling herbs.

A DRUM can be made by joining paper in the same way as Fig. 3. Then draw a circle as large as the top and a second circle slightly larger. Cut out the larger circle and notch the edges as seen in Fig. C. Then turn the edges down, apply glue and fit it securely into the bottom of the drum. For the top, cut out the other circle, attach a loop of thread or ribbon to the center and set the circle in, without gluing it. Decorate with strips of red and gold paper to resemble a drum, like Fig. 4.

BESIDES PLACING gifts on the tree, bright reflectors (often made from tin), stars, and glass balls were placed behind every light. Also a few colored cloth bows were tied to the branches. One final note on authenticity... be sure not to use any plastic decorations!

The Gift of Christmas Past—an illustrated book describing everything you need to know to recreate a Victorian Christmas—has just been released by the American Association for State and Local History. The book includes directions for house and tree decorations, menus and party games, as well as drawings and period etchings. It makes the perfect gift, and a unique historical reference book. Order from: AASLH, Dept. OHJ, 708 Berry Rd., Nashville, TN 37204. \$12.95 per copy, \$9.75 for AASLH members. Add \$1.00 for rush handling.





Tuning Up A Steam Heating System

By Jeremy Robinson

IF YOUR HOUSE doesn't have steam heating, then you're not going to bother trying to install it. But if you already have it, then you have to know how to maintain it so it will function as efficiently as possible. Owners of an automatic oil- or gas-fired system should find that this article will make their job easier.

STEAM HEATING is the oldest form of central heat, dating back to the 1830s. The way it works is quite simple. Water is heated in a boiler until it boils. The steam from the boiling water rises through pipes and travels to radiators throughout the building. The cooler metal of a radiator causes the steam to condense back into water, thereby giving off heat. The water returns to the boiler and is there heated once again. (It travels back either via a second pipe or through the same pipe it rose in, depending on the type of steam-heating system that was installed.)

YOUR BOILER has several basic attachments: a glass sight gauge, a steam gauge, and a safety valve. Automatic systems will also have a high-pressure limit switch, a blow-off valve, and a low-water-level cut-off switch.

Glass Sight Gauge

YOUR GLASS SIGHT GAUGE is the vertical glass tube located between two valves; it is the index of the level of water inside the boiler. When the boiler is cold the level of water inside the tube should be one-half to two-thirds the height of the tube; when hot, it should be one-third to one-half the height. If no water is in the gauge, then you have either an empty boiler or a clogged gauge (maybe even both!). If you have

an empty boiler, then shut it off and let it cool for an hour or two; then add water until the gauge shows the proper level.

YOU SHOULD CHECK the glass sight gauge once a week to make sure that its valves are not clogged. Usually, it will have a drain cock at the lower fitting for draining the dirty water in the tube. If the water can't be drained, then the valve is clogged and the unit requires cleaning.

TO CLEAN THE GLASS SIGHT GAUGE, first empty the boiler. (That procedure is described below.) Although it's empty, you should also close the valves above and below the glass. Loosen both brass nuts at top and bottom and remove the sight glass CAREFULLY (it can easily break) and clean it with ammonia and a round brush. If it is still dirty, then take it to a plumbing supply house and have a new one cut to the proper length. Take the brass nuts along and get new gaskets as well. Then replace the sight glass and gaskets, making certain that you open the valves and refill the boiler.

Steam Gauge

THE STEAM GAUGE is the meter with a little arrow. In units of pounds per square inch it measures the steam pressure in the top of the boiler. (Some gauges will also have a negative reading scale to indicate a vacuum at the top.) The larger the boiler is, the higher its normal reading will be. Average residential service is usually from 0 to 5 psi; about 12 psi is marked as the danger zone.

THE BOILER IS GUARANTEED SAFE to 15 psi (and it is likely to withstand at least twice that

pressure). If the pressure should reach 10 psi, then the high-pressure limit switch will safely shut the system down. There are two easy ways to make sure that the switch is working properly. One way in which I check mine is by first removing the cover of the switch (usually held on by a screw at the bottom) while the boiler is operating. Inside the switch is a pivoted lever; pressing it upward against the switch should immediately cut off the boiler.

THE OTHER WAY to test this control is to set your thermostat for about 85 degrees and observe the pressure gauge. The boiler should shut off when the gauge reaches the cut-off pressure setting on the switch. If the boiler shuts off before the gauge goes above 10 psi, then it is safe. Do not continue the test if the gauge goes above 10 psi. In this event you should turn the thermostat down and have a repair person check your boiler; it may be unsafe to operate.

Safety Valve

A PRECAUTION BUILT INTO EVERY BOILER is the safety or relief valve. This valve is pre-set to open if the pressure should ever reach 15 psi. It then remains completely open until a pre-determined lower pressure is reached, after which it closes once again. To test the safety valve, put on a heavy pair of gloves, stand well clear of the outlet from which the steam is emitted, and pull up on the lever at its back. If it's working, then it should release steam. (Be EXTREMELY CAREFUL when checking the valve:

the released steam is very dangerous and can cause severe scalding.) Don't try this test if the valve looks old or dirty. In that case it's time to replace it.

REPLACING A SAFETY VALVE is an easy job. Just be sure to do it when the boiler is cold and the thermostat is turned down. You can loosen and remove the valve with an adjustable wrench. (New valves can be obtained at a plumbing supply house.) Coat the threads with pipe compound and install the new valve, making sure to tighten it firmly.

Blow-off Valve

THE BLOW-OFF VALVE and low-water-level cut-off switch are one unified system. They allow corrosion products to be drained (blown) off and provide protection from damage that could occur if too little water is present in the boiler. (Accumulation of rust can also interfere with the proper operation of the low-water-level cut-off switch.) The blow-off valve should be opened once a month during the heating season and run until the water coming out is clear. One word of caution: Do not attempt this procedure if you've added to the water a corrosion inhibitor designed for no blow-off use. (For more information on corrosion inhibitors, see below.)

OPENING THE BLOW-OFF VALVE while the boiler is on can be a good test of the low-water-level cut-off switch. (If your system has an internal, self-cleaning blow-off valve, then you cannot check the low-water level cut-off switch.) Place a large metal bucket below the

Sound Advice

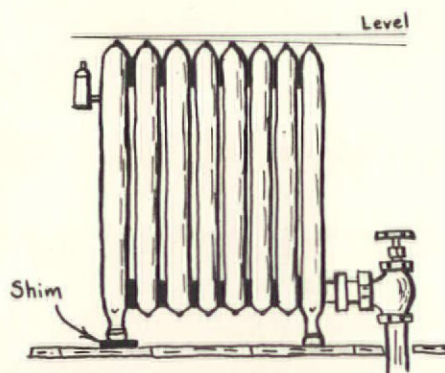
A steam heating system that isn't working properly will always let you know about it--loud and clear. Its vocabulary will consist of thumps, gurgles, and hisses.

Thumps and gurgles are symptoms of the same malady. They are caused by bubbles of steam struggling through pockets of water. To silence them, you must find where water is collecting and eliminate it.

The first place to look is the boiler. If the water level is too high, then water can be entrained in the steam. This will cause lots of sloshing in the distribution pipes.

If the boiler has a proper water level, then the problem is probably in the radiator. A radiator that slopes the wrong way (that is, away from the valve) will trap water inside itself. Steam bubbling its way through this water can be very noisy.

The cure is to alter the slope of the radiator. Insert wooden shims under the two feet farthest away from the valve. Use a level to make sure that the radiator is now



tipping toward the valve. Result: All the water will drain back to the boiler.

Hissing is acceptable only from the vent, and even then only for a brief time. After the steam has risen the vent should close with an audible pop; silence should reign thereafter. If hissing continues, then it is time to replace the vent (see page 254.)

Of course, you should also replace the vent if it never hisses. A vent that isn't hissing isn't venting air. And if air isn't vented, then steam will be unable to enter and the radiator won't heat properly.

blow-off valve. Run the water until clear, or until it is the same color as the water in the glass sight gauge was before you started. At some point in the process the boiler should shut off. If it does not, then call a service person before using the boiler again--or check the water level daily until it is repaired.

The Curse of Corrosion

CORROSION IS THE DESTROYER of boilers. The primary cause of corrosion is the oxygen and mineral deposits that are present in fresh water. Lime deposits coating the walls of the boiler can result in as much as a 25% reduction in efficiency. Some corrosion is inevitable, but the damage can be minimized by draining and refilling the boiler twice a year, and adding a corrosion inhibitor each time. (Corrosion inhibitors can be purchased at a plumbing supply house, along with prepared boiler cleaners.)

YOU MUST FIRST get rid of the floating corrosion and sediment in the low-water-level cut-off mechanism, through the procedure described in the test of the low-water-level cut-off switch. Then, after the boiler has cooled off for an hour or two, remove the safety valve. Draw off a bucket of sediment and water from the spigot of the boiler drain.

THE BOILER DRAIN is usually found near the floor, often interconnected via a water pipe with the water fill valve. It is usually threaded so that a garden hose can be attached in order to drain the boiler. You'll need either a floor drain or a sump pump to get rid of the water from the boiler. If you don't have either of those, then you'll have to lead the hose to a place outside which is lower than the boiler chamber bottom (that is, about 1 or 2 feet off the ground). If this procedure is not feasible, then you'll have to remove the water by bucket brigade.

AFTER COMPLETELY DRAINING the boiler, close the spigot, partially fill the boiler, and drain it again. Do this until the water runs clear. When you refill the boiler add a chemical corrosion inhibitor through the safety-valve hole. Then replace the valve after coating the threads with pipe compound.

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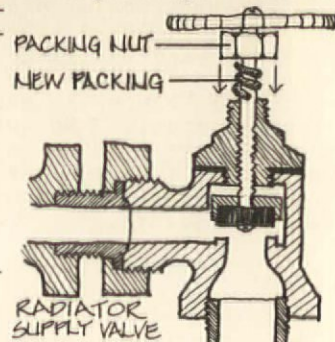



The Value of Valves

HAS YOUR BOILER been on and producing steam for a while? If it has, then you can start inspecting your radiator valves for leakage. Steam pipes rarely develop leaks at the joints, but the stem

packing of most radiator inlet valves deteriorates over the years. You can often hear the steam leaking out or see water condensing on the stem; rust stains on floors or nearby furniture should also give you a clue. Note which valves leak and then turn the thermostat way down (or use the emergency cut-off switch); the system will cool off and, after a while, you'll be able to work at it comfortably.

THE JOB WILL REQUIRE a screwdriver, a knife, an adjustable wrench, and a supply of graphite-asbestos or Teflon valve-stem packing. Unscrew the valve handle and remove the packing nut; then use the knife to remove the remaining packing from the nut. Wind some fresh packing around the stem in the same direction in which the packing nut tightens. Then replace the nut, tightening it firmly. To complete the job, just replace the handle. (New handles of insulating plastic are available--they're good, inexpensive replacements for cracked or broken handles.)



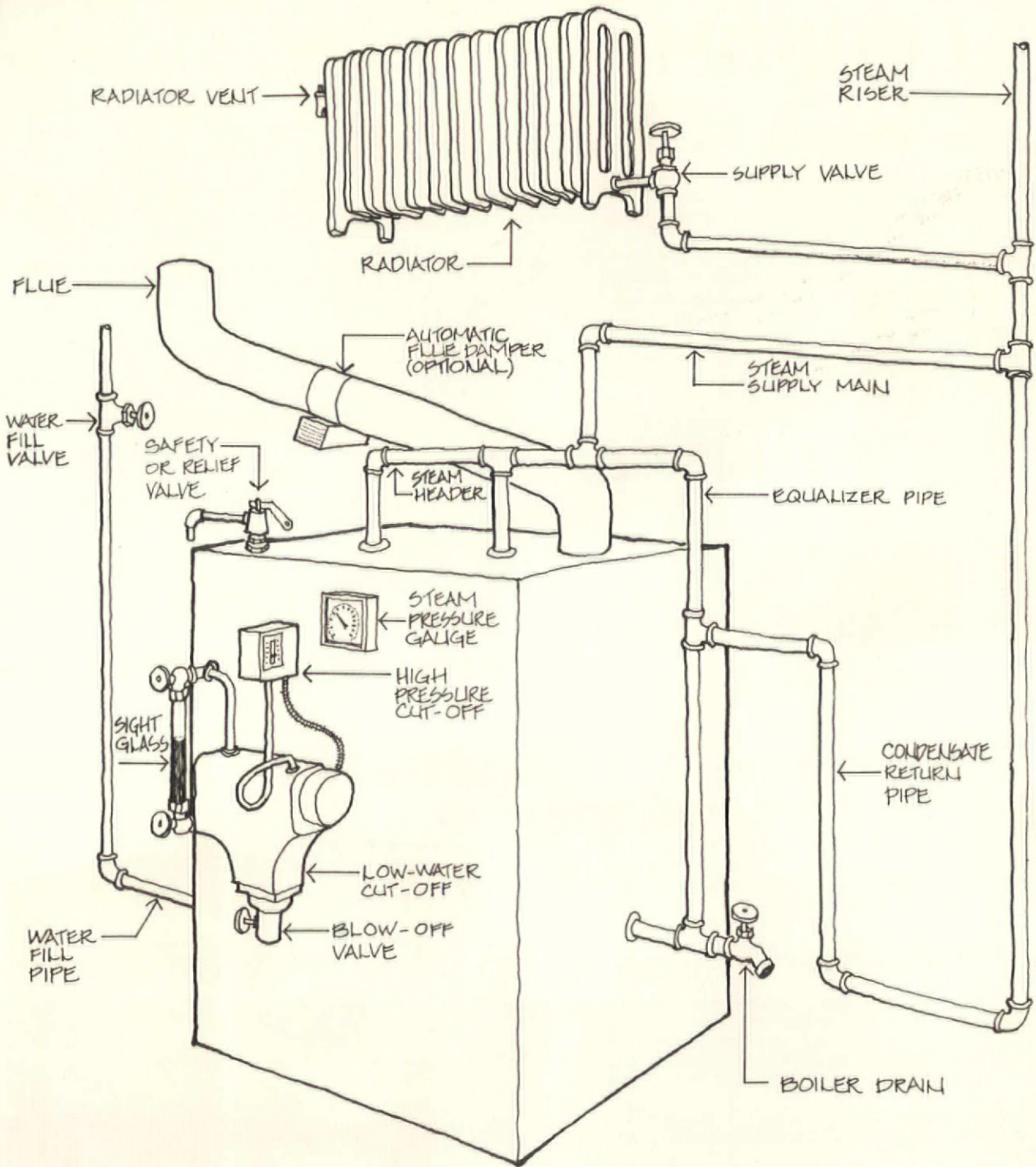
RADIATOR VALVES function as on-off switches for the radiator. Particularly in one-pipe systems (where steam flows to and from the boiler in a single loop) the valve should be fully on or fully off--never in between. If the valve is set partially open, then the steam pressure will keep water from flowing back down the single pipe. Water will then flow out of the valve and soak the area adjacent to it.

The Virtues of Vents

VENTS ARE THE CONTROL MECHANISMS of the individual radiators. They, not the valves, control the rate at which steam enters the radiator, shutting off the flow of steam when it has filled. The vents have a simple mechanism that allows air, but not steam, to pass in and out. When enough steam has entered the radiator and reaches the vent, the vent closes until all the steam has condensed into water; it then opens again to allow more steam to enter.

THE ONLY VARIABLE with vents is the size of the hole through which air escapes. The larger the hole, the faster the air escapes and the faster the radiator heats. Thus, fixed vents are rated from 'very slow' to 'very fast.' Variable vents are also available.

IF YOUR RADIATOR never really heats up, or if steam issues from the vent, then you need to replace the vent. First allow the system to cool. Then unscrew the vent, using either a tool or your hand. (Don't worry about ruining it--it's a goner anyway.) You can replace it with the vent of your choice. Whichever kind you select, you should wrap the threads of the vent with Teflon tape. The tape will make the joint steam-proof and will also make it easier for you to hand-tighten the vent.



Typical One-Pipe Steam Heating System

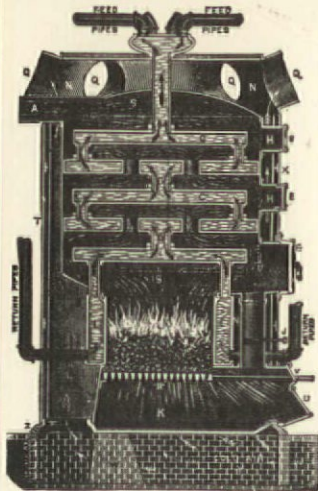
Jonathan Poore

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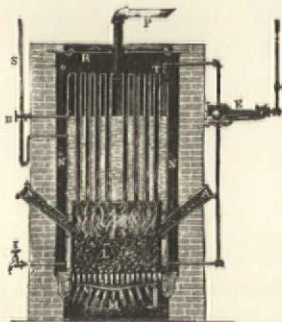
BE IT OIL OR GAS, you may well need to have your burner serviced. A competent job of burner service can bring your system back up to the 60-70% efficiency level of which it is capable. You should do this once a year for oil burners and once every two years for gas burners. Don't neglect it; safety demands it, and it's cheaper than wasted fuel. If you don't have a flame-retention oil burner, then ask your dealer about one. These can save 15-25% on your oil bills.

AS FAR AS AUTOMATIC FLUE DAMPERS are concerned the verdict isn't in yet. More data need to be accumulated. But I believe that dampers can be particularly effective when installed on steam boilers: They keep the water in the boiler much hotter between firings, thus reducing the firing time needed to produce heat. I have installed one on my boiler and am tracking energy costs in relation to degree days.

JEREMY ROBINSON lives in Summit, New Jersey. He is Editor-in-Chief for Architecture and Engineering at the McGraw-Hill Book Company. Mr. Robinson is the author of *Affordable Houses Designed by Architects* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980). He also owns two Victorian houses and manages to keep both of them warm.

Balancing The System

MANY OLD HOUSES suffer from an imbalance in heat: Certain rooms are too hot while others never get warm at all. An easy solution to this problem is to use a different vent in each room. Four vent speeds are generally available: very slow, slow, fast, and very fast. (Fully variable vents are available too.) If a room is overly hot, use a slower vent; too cold, a faster one. You can also balance the system by using a variable vent in the room where the thermostat is installed. The temperature of that room regulates the thermostat, and the thermostat regulates the temperature of the house. With a variable vent you can regulate the temperature of the room.



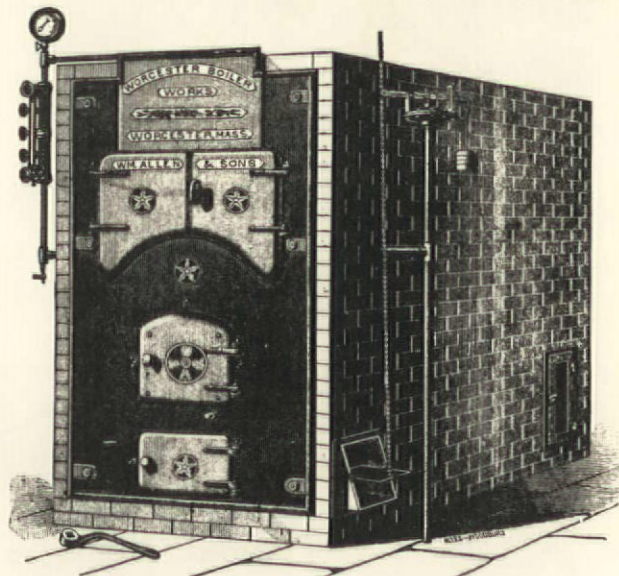
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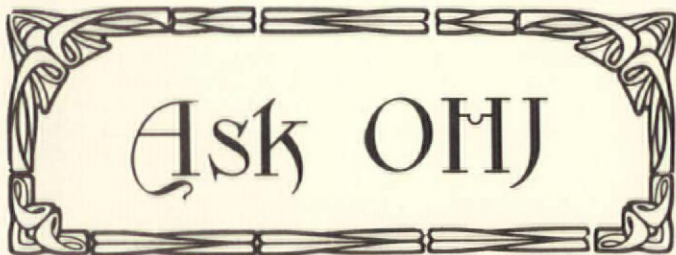


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Ask OHJ

Moisture In Masonry

ON THE SIDE of our summer home, we have a large fireplace constructed of concrete blocks the size of normal clay bricks. Such blocks were common in our area during the twenties. Over the years the "bricks" have absorbed moisture, and frequent cracking occurs during the winter freeze and thaw. We tried putting a sealant on the fireplace, but it only seems to have made matters worse. Is there any way we can remedy the situation?

--Holly Stover Richmond, MA

YOUR PROBLEM sounds like it is caused by rising ground water coming up through the masonry. (Clay bricks may well have suffered a similar or worse fate.) Applying a waterproof coating to the outside of the chimney only decreases the amount of moisture that can evaporate from the blocks. Decay is thereby accelerated, especially during freeze-thaw cycles.

THE PLACE to attack the problem is at the source, where water is entering the masonry. You should either improve the drainage around the foundations of the fireplace, or introduce a damp-proof course in the masonry itself. The latter job usually requires a mason.

Saving The Varnish

CAN THE MASTER APPLIANCE HEAT GUN be used to remove old, peeling paint without damaging the original varnish and stain underneath?

--Joseph Nicholas Joliet, IL

PROBABLY. While it works quickly on paint, the heat gun doesn't remove varnish very effectively. The paint you want to remove is peeling, so we can assume it isn't bonded well to the original varnish anyway: It may come away easily, leaving the varnish underneath intact. But be aware that varnish exposed too long to heat will begin to melt, scorch, or craze.

YOU HAVE NOTHING to lose by trying to selectively remove the paint this way. If it works, and the varnish beneath is in good shape,

great! If you do damage the varnish, you'll need just one application of chemical stripper to remove it. Then you can refinish with an oil, a varnish, or just wax.

Wax Build-Up

IN OUR 1856 HOUSE, the floors under the area rugs put down by the previous owner are lighter than the rest of the floor. Is there a safe way to remove old wax from these floors without damaging the patina?

--Carole Beaseley Huntsville, AL

ALL FLOORS which are waxed need to be periodically stripped of built-up old wax and dirt before rewaxing. Use any commercial wax remover, as long as it is specified for use on wood floors, not tile or linoleum. (See our Feb. 1981 issue for more on patina in old floors.)

Stackwood Construction

SOME TIME AGO I heard a reference to "stackwood construction" on the radio. I have been unable to find any book in any library--or any librarian--who can tell me anything more about this. I am interested in using this method for a small storage building. Can you help?

--Alice Woodall Boston, MA

STACKWOOD OR CORDWOOD construction refers to a method of building using short sections of trees (8 to 10 inches) laid in mortar with the butt ends exposed on either side. It is a method which has been used since the early settlers to create dwellings and storage buildings. Embedding lumber in masonry is generally not a good idea in terms of longevity of a building. But if the wood is well seasoned and allowed "to breathe" at both ends, then the wall may last quite a while. Some buildings have even been sided over with clapboard to protect the exposed ends of the logs. There is a book on the subject: Cordwood Masonry Houses-- A Practical Guide for the Owner-Builder by Robert L. Roy (1980). It is available in paperback (\$9.20, ppd.) and hardcover (\$16.20, ppd.) from Sterling Publishing Co., Attention: Order Dept., 2 Park Ave., New York, NY 10016.


Do You Have Questions for OHJ?

Send your questions with pictures or drawings, if possible. (We prefer black & white photographs.) We cannot promise to answer all questions personally, although we will try to answer all questions from current subscriber/members. Questions of general interest will be answered in print. Write: Questions Editor, Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

SOME SECURITY MEASURES are basic necessities. We also recognize that some neighborhoods require higher security than others. Trying to decide just how far to go ("should I install an alarm system?") often raises questions about which of our fears are real, and which are over-reactions to rather remote threats. My advice is to substitute statistical analysis for psychoanalysis. If more than 10% of your neighbors have invested in a given security measure, be sure you know the reasons why. If the figure rises to 30%, you'd better seriously consider following suit. Unfortunately, you see, the purpose of locks and alarms is not to stop burglary in general, but rather to redirect it to someone else's house. If your home is an easy mark relative to the homes around it, you may be in for trouble.

Thieves are sensitive even to the value of copper pipe and electric tools. They wait patiently for such items to be carried into a house, then they carry them out.

WHETHER OR NOT you go for expensive security systems, a variety of miscellaneous measures will help discourage and outwit the would-be burglar.

IAS I MENTIONED, there is no lock, alarm, or even armed guard that's better than a large, noisy dog. Don't make the tragic mistake of telling everyone your dog won't bite. 

2 YOUR HOUSE and yard should be sufficiently well lit that a person in dark clothing would be visible in a doorway, at the windows, climbing the backyard fence, and doing other suspicious things.

3 WHEN YOU ARE AWAY, use timers on lights and appliances. There are timers now which create a realistic pattern of use (for example, the Night Sentry Light Control carried by the Brookstone Company*). A bathroom light or TV, at least, can be on briefly late at night or in the dawn hours. (And when you're away, of course, have the grass cut regularly, have paper deliveries stopped, ask someone to pick up the mail.)

4 JOIN OPERATION ID and post the decals prominently. This program is operated by police departments. To join, you mark your portable property with an identifying number. The police will provide you with a pen for this purpose; it resembles a small drill. The police then put your number on file and give you the decals, announcing your membership to any felon who can read. Police consensus is that decals do serve to deter burglars.

5 AN OLD HOUSE is a good place to hide a treasure, as many gothic novels have noted. Most people keep all their valuables in their bedrooms. Please, exercise a little ingenuity. (But don't hide everything, or you may find your house torn apart.)

6 MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, have a block or neighborhood association that works to reduce crime. Do not treat police with unmitigated hostility. Some of them, at least, are trying to do a decent job. They will advise you on the best way to secure your home; they know about programs under which you can apply for government funds (for example, for street lighting); and they will respond more quickly and effectively on blocks where they feel welcome.

IN ADDITION, you must have people out on the street, on the front porch or the stoop. Whether on regular patrols or informal watch, they should be willing to notify someone when they see something suspicious. Step out of your front door in the evening to see what's happening. A block is soon known as hard to rip off when the majority of people living there take some active role in trying to stop crime.

Basic Defenses

YOUR FIRST AND MAJOR CONCERN should be perimeter security. In other words, check out all means of access into your home. Favorite points for forced entry (roughly in order of preference) are: front door; fire-escape window; rear door and windows; roof, when there is access from other roofs; front windows; cellar doors.

INCREDIBLY, most houses can be broken into in a matter of seconds with a couple of strong kicks or moderate pressure on a pry bar. If you can make the points of entrance to your home sufficiently strong to hold off a thief for fifteen or twenty minutes, you will win the battle in almost all cases.

A noisy, plausibly ferocious dog is unbeatable protection.

BASIC SECURITY depends on effective physical barriers. Alarms are a deterrent in many instances, but they are not a first-line defense. Good solid locks and doors are still essential. In judging the strength of any lock, door, or other barrier, bear in mind three relevant factors: the strength of the lock or barrier itself, the strength of whatever it's attached to, and the strength of the attaching mechanism. Millions of homes are outfitted with expensive locks attached with tiny screws to flimsy doors in rotten frames.

IN PLANNING SECURITY, you also have to remember that you must be able to escape quickly from your home in case of fire. The guiding rules? (1) You should be able to get everyone out of your house in less than a minute. (2) A 12-year-old should be able to manage the locks, bolts, or whatever has to be opened en route. (3) There should be some sort of useable exit from each floor.

* Brookstone Co., 521 Vose Farm Rd., Dept. OHJ, Peterborough, NH 03458. (603) 924-7181. Free catalog of their hard-to-find tools and supplies.

Roof Hatches

LET'S START AT THE TOP. Roof hatches, especially in row-houses, are often easy pickings for those who work and play on city rooftops. If you can jiggle a hatch cover from the inside, it's almost certainly not secure. Ordinary wood or tin and tarpaper covers are not good enough, particularly if the wood of the collar is soft or masonry below is crumbling. If there's access from another roof to yours, you should have a metal hatch cover. (Access includes approaches by Olympic-length leaps and descents by rope from higher rooftops.)

ONE COMMON, STURDY type of iron hatch cover takes the place of a wood cover, sitting over the hatch collar like a box-top. It's set in a metal frame that's attached to the inside of the collar (inside the house) with round-headed screws. These screws run through holes in metal straps that hang down from the frame on the inside of the collar. The cover itself is held in place with a heavy sliding bolt that runs into a channel cut in the collar. This arrangement provides little purchase for prying, and no means of unscrewing the frame or unhinging the cover from the outside.

BEWARE an important potential drawback to this hatch cover: The cover may be too heavy for some people to lift. Before you order one, let the weakest person who might be alone in the house test his or her strength on a similar cover in a neighbor's house.

THERE ARE MANY alternate designs, too. An iron-worker in New York, Richard Reade*, makes a hatch cover that opens downward, according to a design created by his father thirty years ago. The cover is very secure, and fits under the original wood cover. The would-be thief who raises the wood cover faces a solid piece of steel, flush with the roof. (See the photos on the next page.)

SOME IRON-WORKERS sell grilles that they install under the hatch cover. I don't recommend these, especially if they must be padlocked.

Millions of homes are outfitted with expensive locks attached with tiny screws to flimsy doors in rotten frames.

A WORD ABOUT PADLOCKS: These are commonly used where they aren't needed, and sometimes wrongly used where they are. You'll often see a heavy iron window guard secured with a small padlock that can easily be broken. Some people put padlocks on the sliding bolts that secure hatch covers and cellar doors from the inside. The padlock really doesn't add much strength to the bolting mechanism (although it may cause a problem for an intruder who's broken in somewhere else and would prefer to exit by the roof). It may, however, cause a problem for you in a fire. In smoke, when you're frightened, it's easy to drop and lose a key. I don't recommend padlocking a hatch cover, ex-

cept perhaps when the house is empty; at least keep the key in the padlock when people are at home.

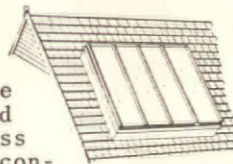
PADLOCKS VARY greatly in quality, with the best usually costing the most. But there are exceptions, and even good locks have their peculiarities. For example, a police detective reports that a popular model of the highly rated and otherwise well made American-brand padlock can be picked with a long, thin nail.

Incredibly, most houses can be broken into in a matter of seconds. If you can hold off a thief for fifteen minutes, you will win the battle in almost all cases.

CELLAR DOOR HATCHES are often of similar design to roof hatches, so the same principles apply. Remember, though, that a cellar must be vented, especially if you have an oil burner. The cover may provide the only vent; sometimes builders forget this.

Skylights

ANY KIND OF ACCESS to your roof? Then all skylights must be made secure. Even skylights over stairwells need attention (though felons much prefer to drop into a room than onto stairs). The most assault-proof method, and one used by some contractors, is to seal up the skylight. This may not seem like a bad idea if the neighborhood is rough and the skylight glass is undistinguished. But the consequent loss of light can be most disagreeable. If the skylight is over a stair, you may never be able to light the stairwell adequately with existing electrical outlets. Better to install a grille under the skylight, or a cage over it. The latter has the advantage of protecting the glass—essential if you have art glass. Stained and etched glass are so much in demand that there are now thieves who specialize in them.



A GOOD SKYLIGHT CAGE should have bars at least 1/2-inch thick, set no more than five inches apart. The cage can be attached to the roof with spikes (of at least two inches) that are welded to the metal.

ANOTHER, more attractive treatment is to substitute safety glass or sheet plastic for the glass. This is slightly less secure than metal fortifications, but should be adequate for low-risk skylights.

* Richard Reade, A & Associated Iron Works, 274 46th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11220.

Windows, Alas

MANY BURGLARS don't like to risk breaking glass, at least on the street side of a house. That's lucky, for the fact is, windows are extremely difficult to secure. There is no commercial latch or lock that is of any significant value. Window gates are hideous. Moreover, gates won't hold unless they are properly installed into a bottom track, and many windows do not have a sill to hold such a track.

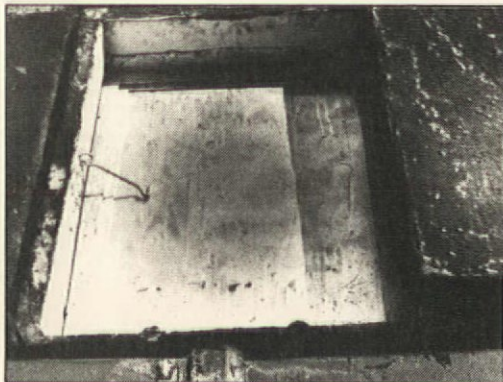
FOR SOME WINDOWS, alas, the only effective barrier is a set of bars or a similar see-through metal guard. This is true of street-level windows, which can be kicked in, frame and all (no type of pin, therefore, will work). Secluded accessible back windows are also prime targets. Many backyards have sheds or fences that make for an easy climb to windows that would otherwise be inaccessible. Check step-over possibilities for every window, back or front: Could an intruder step over to a window from a shed, window, fire escape, or any part of an adjacent house?

IN TERMS OF the security of a window guard, the following points are relevant. The bars should be at least a half-inch thick; a full inch is recommended at ground level. Bars should be reinforced by one or two horizontal

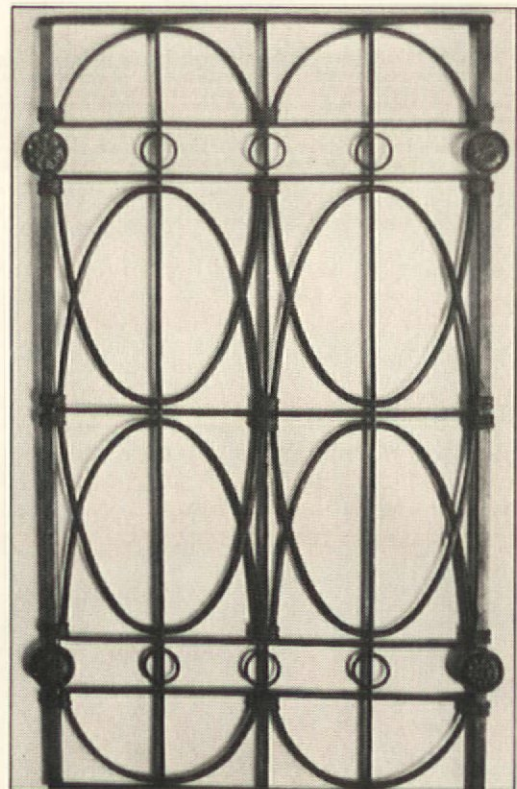
strips. Because today's mild steel does not weld as well as the old wrought iron, it's better that the bars run through holes in the horizontal pieces, rather than be welded. Decorative grillework between bars also serves as reinforcement. Window grilles that curve out over the ledge may allow for window boxes (a nice idea); the curve also makes it impossible to get a good foothold on the ledge.

I'M SORRY TO SAY I wasn't able to find an unobtrusive way to secure high-risk windows in a frame house, or one that doesn't do some damage to the wood. An acceptable way to anchor bars on a frame house is to set a metal frame on the outside of the window and one on the inside. These frames are then bolted together through the window frame, and the bars are welded to the metal frame.

SOMETIMES BARS are placed inside windows, on the interior sill, to make it more difficult for someone outside to get at them. But interior bars create the ambiance of a prison. I've seen people try to alleviate the grim mood by painting the bars a light color, but this doesn't work very well. Interior bars are a drastic step that doesn't usually need to be taken. Exceptions can be made for secluded fire-escape windows, high-risk ground level windows, or when price is no object and the grilles can be art objects. (See below.)



The downward-opening hatch cover described earlier. Details of its manufacture are a trade secret. Top, note the flat, un-pry-able metal cover faced by the would-be thief. Lower photo was taken from inside closet that leads to roof hatch. Thanks to Dr. Arthur Hazlewood, New York.



Design by Joel Schwartz (P.O. Box 205-OHJ, Deansboro, NY 13328. (315) 841-4477) includes a secret locking mechanism that does away with padlocks. Note that this is an interior grille; its sculptural quality keeps it from adding "prison ambiance" to a room. Expect to pay \$450 to \$900 for such originality.



If you're in a neighborhood where window grilles are a necessity, you might consider budgeting more than usual for a set of custom-made bars. In this example, the iron-worker fabricated the bars to match the detailing of the original fence and balustrade.



Close-up of the new window grille

BEFORE INSTALLING any kind of window guard, check your local laws. In New York City, for example, only one kind of gate is approved for fire-escape windows, and, if you bar your windows, one window on each floor must have freely opening (not key locked) bars. These and several related laws are widely ignored in private homes, and in effect are not enforced in one- or two-family homes. But use common sense: **DON'T BAR YOURSELF INTO YOUR HOUSE.**

A WIDELY-USED COMPROMISE between anti-crime and fire-protection concerns is the use of a movable set of bars secured with a padlock. There are drawbacks to this: (1) A padlock is not easy to open in a smoke-filled room. (2) A padlock that can be reached by an intruder is usually a weak link in the system. (3) A movable or removable guard is usually more expensive. If you insist on using padlocks, be sure that all the windows open with the same key, have duplicate keys, and always keep them in the same place.

Bars Upstairs ?

THIS QUESTION cannot always be answered unequivocally, but except in the very worst neighborhoods, you can usually avoid putting bars on front windows above the first storey if you use a combination of other security measures:

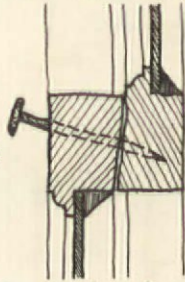
- ▶ **KEEP** the windows well lit from the outside. Be sure they're not obstructed by shrubbery.
- ▶ **USE** storm windows. The additional frame, glass, and latch serve as a moderate deterrent. (Even weatherstripping has some annoyance value.) Normally a burglar doesn't want to spend more than a few very quiet seconds on an exposed window ledge.
- ▶ **PUT** in window boxes. They're pretty and they interfere with getting a footing on the ledge. Thieves hate them.
- ▶ **INSTALL** an alarm and post the decals, if crime is really a major problem in your district. It may help. (More about alarms in an article to come.)
- ▶ **LOCK OR PIN** your windows, but note the sad news on window locks....

Locks & Pins

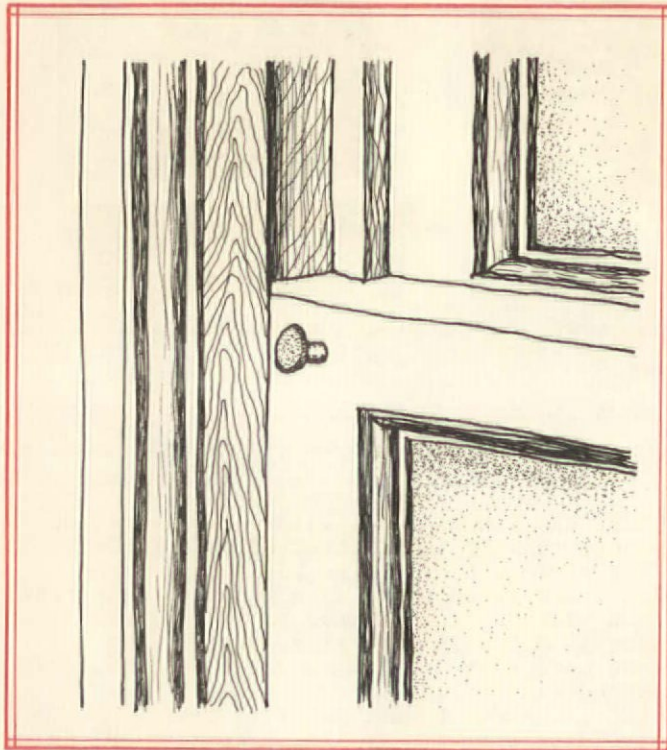
ORDINARY THUMB-LATCHES usually installed on double-hung windows provide no protection. They can be pried out almost without effort. The auxiliary locks sold for windows aren't much better. There is one good way (though still not perfect) to secure a double-hung window, and it's approved by authorities on crime, locks, and consumer affairs. It is the simple window pin.

WINDOW PINS are usually made with two common nails (3½-in., 16d, or 4-in., 20d) which are inserted into holes drilled on either side of

the window sash. Each hole should run through the inside sash and three quarters of the way through the outside sash. The holes should be small enough to hold the nail snugly--but not so snugly that you can't pull the nail out readily. Drill on a slight downward angle to make it difficult for a would-be burglar to dislodge the nail by jiggling the window--in other words, may gravity be with you.



A SECOND SET of holes may be drilled to allow the window to be pinned in an open position; five and a half inches should be the maximum. When you are away, accessible windows should be closed.



IT'S TRUE that someone can break a pane of glass, reach in, and work the pin loose. On windows that can be seen from the street, however, most burglars do not want to do that. A major home-improvement book suggests making a home-made pin more secure by cutting off the nails flush with the sash, and then keeping a magnet nearby to remove them. This is rather silly: As wood swells with summer heat and humidity, the magnet may not work.

YOU SHOULD BE AWARE that there are some variations on the basic pin. For example, there are commercial locks that are essentially key-locked pins. I have not seen one that is any stronger than a home-made pin, or that would hold off a burglar willing to break glass to enter. Keys, as we've said, present problems of their own in relation to emergency exits. There's also a commercial lock that is a screw used as a pin, sold with a special wrench for undoing the screw.

Fire Escapes

FIRE-ESCAPE WINDOWS are as dangerous with respect to crime as they are necessary with respect to fire. Most fire-escapes are accessible, though they may not look it. Scaling walls and jumping for the fire escape is basic gymnastic exercise on city streets. Even good kids do it. A thief can also drop from the roof (with a rope if necessary) or step over (a big step) from an adjacent window.

IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE to make fire-escape windows really secure without also interfering with their escape function. Some retractable gates, such as Protect-A-Gard (legally approved for NYC) offer fair protection when properly anchored in a track. Even though it costs about \$150, I wouldn't count on the gate alone if a window were truly secluded and dark. Back-up protection might include an alarm, a storm window, and a pin.

ALAS, MOST CRIMINALS don't bother with the windows anyway, because it's much easier to pop right in a door. In another issue of *The Journal*, I'll continue with information on doors, hinges, and frames; period locks and high-security locks (including brand names); safety glass; and the different kinds of alarm systems.

MARGARET MINER is a free-lance writer, an editor, the author of a book on interior design, and an old-house owner in Brooklyn. She researched this article far and wide, interviewing police detectives and security-systems manufacturers, among others.

Her special thanks go to Alex Herrera of the New York City Landmarks Commission, and to ironworker Joseph Fiebiger.



Sensitive Rehabilitation: It's Not Difficult

IN GIVING THE "Remuddling Of The Month" award in each issue, we are trying to focus attention on what NOT to do to old buildings. Some of the examples seem ludicrous on the page. Yet the fact is that they were done--sometimes by people with the best of intentions.

MOST OFTEN, remuddling mistakes are made by owners who have no perspective or sensitivity towards old buildings. They regard an old building as a blank canvas, to be painted upon as they see fit. What they create most often is not a masterpiece, but rather an assemblage of unrelated elements. A collage may look OK on a museum wall--but do you want one on your street?

BESIDES a lack of sensitivity, we have begun to see a new problem: Homeowners who want to do "the right thing" to their house, but who are paralyzed by the welter of conflicting information hurled at them.

"DON'T TELL ME what the problems are," the well-intentioned homeowner pleads. "Tell me what I should DO!"



The Guidelines do not encourage covering a wooden house with fake stone in an attempt to make it look like a castle.

The Secretary's Guidelines

MAKING ON-THE-SPOT decisions is always easier when you understand basic principles. That's why, as part of our Restoration Basics series, we are going to re-examine the "Standards for Rehabilitation" issued by the Secretary of the Interior. We first published the Guidelines in the January 1977 OHJ. With the pace of rehabilitation picking up every day, the Guidelines are even more relevant today than they were in 1977.

THERE ARE TWO REASONS for examining the Secretary's Guidelines closely. First, the Guidelines are the most concise and comprehensive set of dos and don'ts for sensitive rehabilitation, both for homeowners and for commercial developers. Second, if you are rehabilitating for commercial purposes, there are some powerful economic incentives for following the Guidelines. More on this later.

It Should Be Fun

BY USING THE GUIDELINES to instill a greater understanding of basics, we hope to make sensitive rehabilitation easier and more fun. Often, the decisions relating to rehabilitation seem confusing and difficult. "There are no easy answers," the experts tell us. That attitude can be downright discouraging to an old-house owner who is trying to fix up his or her place with decidedly limited amounts of cash and time. Ours is not the luxury of museum-quality restoration based on unlimited budgets.

FOR MOST OF US, the goal of old-house living is to make (or keep) the place a comfortable dwelling, preserve its architectural character, and have fun while doing it. As preservation technology gets more sophisticated, there's a danger that the seeming complexity of it all will make sensitive rehabilitation seem like a terrible chore instead of fun.

Museum Houses Have It Easier

SURPRISINGLY, museum restorers don't face as many troublesome decisions as does the average old-house owner. That's because the museum curators are operating under clear philosophical principles. Usually, they are doing one of two things:



Results of a piecemeal approach to rehabilitation are painfully apparent here. Over time, virtually every element on the exterior of this turn-of-century house has been changed: (1) Asphalt shingles replaced the original roof; (2) New siding was put on—which among other things covered over decorative shingles in the gables and completely altered the look of the bulk of the building; (3) Wooden porch substructure was replaced with cinderblock; (4) Porch balustrade was replaced with plywood;

(5) Replacement gutters were added in an obtrusive fashion; (6) Raw aluminum storm windows were added that visually separate the windows from the rest of the facade. The final result is a hodgepodge that bears no resemblance to the original structure and—far worse—is quite ugly. While this may seem an extreme example, it shows the cumulative effect of a series of seemingly small decisions.

- (1) Preserving the structure exactly as it was found; or
- (2) Restoring it to look the way it did at some predetermined point in the past.

SOME HARD THINKING may have to be done on how to incorporate new mechanical systems into a museum house. But the decisions usually flow quite logically from the basic philosophy.

IN REHABILITATION WORK, on the other hand, the guidelines aren't as clear as "preserve" or "restore." You start to run into taste and judgment words like "appropriate" and "significant." The word "restoration" is applied to a lot of old-house work. But rarely is any old house that is used as a dwelling truly restored—in the sense of bringing it back to exactly the way it was at some previous point in time.

WHAT MOST OF US do to our old houses is rehabilitation. The Secretary of Interior Guidelines define rehabilitation in this way:

"Rehabilitation means the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values."

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION is hard enough; trying to translate those abstract ideas into specific actions to take on your trouble-prone old building can make strong people weep.

THE DILEMMA is that rehabilitation, as defined, is an attempt to balance two competing values: Contemporary needs vs. architectural, historical and cultural values. Or, put another way, the present vs. the past.

CONSEQUENTLY, the quandary of sensitive old-house owners and commercial developers is understandable. Most are willing to grant the desirability of preserving interesting old buildings. But preservation must not drive costs up exorbitantly, or cause projects to drag on forever.



What a difference a plan makes: This 19th century Gothic cottage has benefitted from a program that called for maximum retention of its original features. Only a few details (like electric power lines) tell us that this photo wasn't taken in 1881. The roofing material is 20th century; the concrete steps on the front porch obviously aren't original; and the gable peaks doubtless sported finials when the house was young. Nonetheless, there has obviously been a conscious effort to respect the

original appearance of the building. The final result is one of overall design harmony—and is a delight to the eye.

The Secretary of The Interior's Guidelines—with their emphasis on retaining or replacing original architectural features—lead homeowners to results like these. Meeting the need for contemporary comfort can usually be met without compromising the architectural character of the building.

The Guidelines' Dollar Incentives

FOR ANYONE REHABILITATING an old building for commercial use, there are significant tax benefits under the new Economic Recovery Act of 1981. Rehabilitations that comply with the Guidelines qualify for significant tax breaks. The new law provides a 25% investment tax credit for the cost of rehabilitating historic commercial and industrial buildings, and residential buildings that are for rental. Buildings which qualify are:

- Those listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places, and
- Those located in registered historic districts if they are certified as contributing to the significance of the district.

THE EXISTING CERTIFICATION PROCESS administered by the National Park Service will be used to identify eligible buildings and certify that the rehabilitation complies with the Guidelines.

TO QUALIFY for the investment tax credit, buildings must be substantially rehabilitated. Rehabilitation costs must equal \$5,000 or the initial cost of the building—whichever is greater.

For Homeowners...

MOST OF US aren't rehabilitating commercial property on a scale that will qualify for tax incentives. Most of us just want to keep our old house livable—and do it in a way that is sensitive to its architectural character. The Secretary's Guidelines can also be quite helpful to non-commercial property owners...especially with additional interpretation.

IN UPCOMING ARTICLES, we'll show how to use the Guidelines as a decision-making tool. We'll show that it's not all that hard to achieve a good workable balance between architectural character, structural integrity and contemporary convenience.

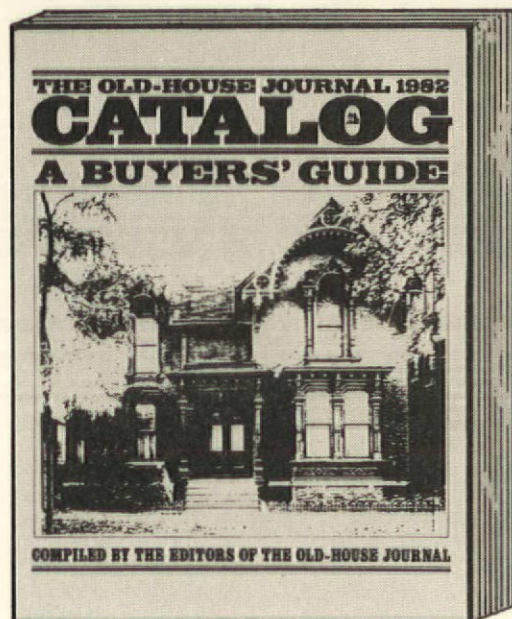
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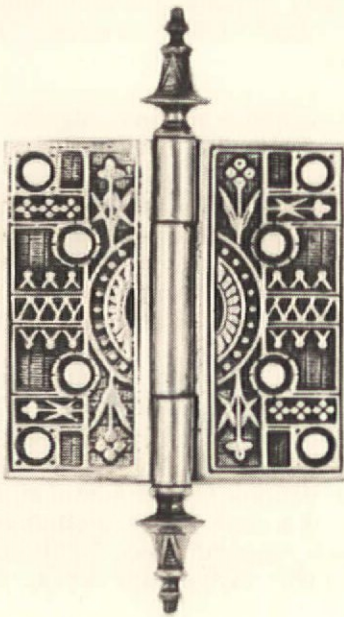
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The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217

Restoration Products News

Fine Castings

Ritter and Son Hardware has recently introduced a retail line of fine brass hardware for the discriminating restorer. The "lost-wax" casting method is used to produce an especially crisp, clear, and exquisitely detailed line of brass hardware. This method requires a new wax pattern for each piece cast. The new line includes ten different suites of co-ordinated house hardware (door hinges, knobs, plates, etc.), and assorted supplementary pieces such as sash lifts and an ornate security chain. These embellished pieces of hardware are all reproductions of originals from the late 19th century. As an example of their price range, door hinges start at \$30, and all door-knobs are \$27.75. For more information, send \$1.00 for their catalog: Ritter and Son Hardware, 46901 Fish Rock Rd., Dept 911-OHJ, Gualala, CA 95445. (707) 884-3363.



Etc...

When insulation is installed in a basement ceiling or crawlspace, chicken wire is often used to hold it against the floor above. *Lightning Fast Insulation Supports* make this job easier. The price is about \$3 for one hundred 16-inch supports. For the nearest distributor contact: Wire Products Corp., PO Box 5446-OHJ, Greensboro, NC 27403. (800) 334-0807. *Thanks to L.A. Spencer.*

Here is a handy tool for removing paint from carved furniture or mouldings. It consists of a handle and two blades—each with two different profiles. It's available for \$4.85 ppd. from Carl E. Maute Co., Dept. OHJ, 124 Gould Avenue, Depew, NY 14043. (716) 685-1080. *Thanks to L. McKinzey.*

Ban Lifted

The Federal ban on gas yardlights, which was to have been put into effect January 1, 1982, has recently been repealed. Nevertheless in some states there are still local ordinances banning the use of gaslights and you may want to switch to electric for other reasons. Crawford's Old-House Store sells a gas-to-electric conversion kit for the do-it-yourselfer. The kit is \$56.00 and has low voltage electric lights which resemble a double-mantle gaslight. An added feature: a photoelectric cell which turns your light off and on automatically. According to Crawford's, energy savings in some localities will pay for this kit in less than six months. Catalog—\$1.50. Crawford's Old-House Store, Dept. OHJ, 301 McCall, Waukesha, WI 53186. (414) 542-0134.



Panel Doors

Grand Openings is a new line of exterior and interior doors offered by Renovation Concepts. Eight designs are available in solid red oak, alder (similar to birch or maple), cherry and walnut. (No veneers or core stocks are used.) Stock sizes are available: 80, 84, or 96 inch lengths; 36, 30, or 32 inch widths; and 1-3/4, 1-3/8, or 2-1/4 inch thicknesses.

A traditional floating panel design is used to prevent cracking, and top and bottom rails are doweled. Both models have a sanding sealer applied; the exterior door also receives a varnish with sunscreen. Doors can be ordered with a clear varnish or left natural. Panelled bi-fold doors (to match) are also available.

Renovation Concepts will make minor modifications in their stock doors; for example panels can be omitted so you can install glass panels. The exterior door in the photograph is available in oak for \$578, interior—\$353 (wholesale subtract 15%). Send for the free *Grand Openings* brochure. Renovation Concepts Inc., PO Box 3720 Dept. OHJ, Minneapolis, MN 55403. (612) 377-9526.

(Continued on next page)

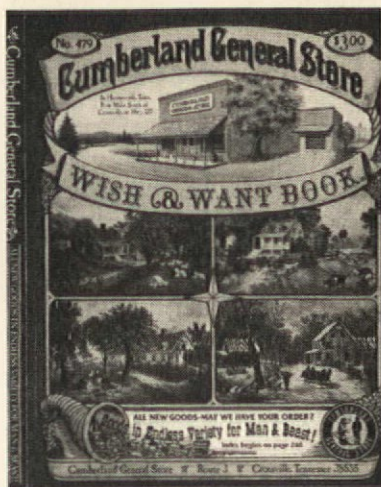
Gift Ideas

A line of reasonably priced Art Nouveau glass is available from Lundberg Studios. This includes lampshades (designed after Tiffany and Steuben shades), vases, and paperweights. Lundberg will also do custom engraved or cameo shades. Their work, which is usually done in cobalt blue and white (reminding one of a peacock), can be seen in their color brochure available for \$3. Prices begin at \$35 for a paperweight or small vase. When ordering, specify retail or wholesale; wholesale customers must use letterhead and resale number. Lundberg Studios, Box 26-OHJ, 131 Marine Ave., Davenport, CA 95017. (408) 423-2532.



Brass items can make an especially appropriate old-house gift for the holidays.

A luxury item but still inexpensive, for your bathroom or a friend's, is an over-the-tub soap & sponge holder in brass wire (no flimsy castings), \$21, from Remodelers' & Renovators' Supply. Another item in their free catalog is a wall-mounted bath caddy, \$26. These are just two of a complete line of brass accessories. Remodelers' and Renovators' Supply, 611 E. 44th St., Dept OHJ, Boise, ID 83704. (208) 377-5465.



Talk about a wish and want book! Cumberland General Store has a remarkable mail-order catalog which takes you back in time. The terrific 250-page catalog is \$3.75 ppd., and would make a marvelous stocking stuffer for any old-house lover. For an added bonus you can include a Cumberland's gift certificate. Even if you aren't interested in owning a cow anti-kicker or a new top hat, you will have a wonderful time poring over the 10,000 items in this illustrated catalog. Cumberland labels themselves as the "complete outfitter for your journey back to basics," a title well deserved: They offer everything from kerosene lamps and canning equipment (even tin cans), to several models of surreys—fringe and all. Cumberland General Store, Rt. 3, Dept. OHJ, Crossville, TN 38555. (615) 484-8481.

How about candlesticks for gift giving? Baldwin not only carries their familiar line of reproduction Early American hardware, but they also offer a collection of classic brass candlesticks, appropriate for almost every style house. These forged solid brass pieces, ranging from \$15—\$60, are protected by a clear baked-on enamel finish and require no additional polishing. The Lamp and Accessories brochure is 75¢ (other brochures are available for 75¢: Rim Lock, Mortise Lock, and Lever Lock). Baldwin Hardware Mfg. Corp., 841 Wyomissing Blvd., PO Box 82-OHJ, Reading, PA 19603. (215) 777-7811.

Your Tree

These items are perfect for decorating your tree in keeping with the traditional theme described on page 251. The following companies offer ornaments which are not so much reproductions as pretty, traditional ornaments that have decorated Christmas trees since Victorian times.

"The Horchow Collection" is a mail-order company. We looked through their free catalog and picked out the most historically appropriate ornaments that they carry, listed here, to ensure that you'll have time to order for this holiday season.

Assorted German-made embossed silver ornaments, 30/\$30; hand-painted glass ornaments, 12/\$20; bisque angels, 6/\$18.50; lacquered apples with fabric stems and leaves, 12/\$18.50; German-made solid brass bells, with red ribbons, 6/\$15; assorted brass ornaments, 6/\$18; old-fashioned drums, with tiny "pearl" drumsticks, 6/\$10; handmade miniature sleds, 3 in. long, ("Flexible" or "Rosebud"), \$15 each; and rocking horses, 2½ in. long x 2 in. tall, \$12.50 each.

The prices are approximate and do not include postage. To place an order, phone Horchow's 24-hour toll free number: (800) 527-0303—the operator will give you a price quote for a check-with-order purchase, charge your order, or answer any inquiry. Horchow's, PO Box 34257-OHJ, Dallas, TX 75234.

Another company, Mr. Jonas & Associates Inc., offers the hard-to-find star that we described in our Nov. 1980 issue, "Decorating For An Old-Fashioned Christmas." The star is available in two models: #304, a 10-light star (about \$13), and #303, a 20-light star (about \$22). Each has a vinyl-coated frame to prevent rusting, and weatherproofed bulb bases. This company doesn't normally supply directly to the consumer, but Mr. Jonas will tell OHJ readers the address of a dealer in your area. Mr. Jonas & Associates Inc., Dept OHJ, 200 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010. (212) 989-3500.

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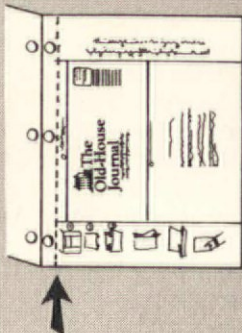
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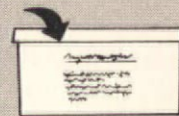
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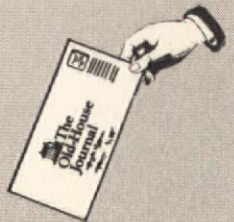
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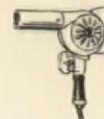
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CUMMINGS & MILLER—Two architectural pattern books from 1865 & 1873 show house plans & ornamental details in Mansard, Italianate & Bracketed styles. Over 2,000 designs & illustrations. 248 pages—Jumbo 10 x 13" size. Softbound. \$15.95.

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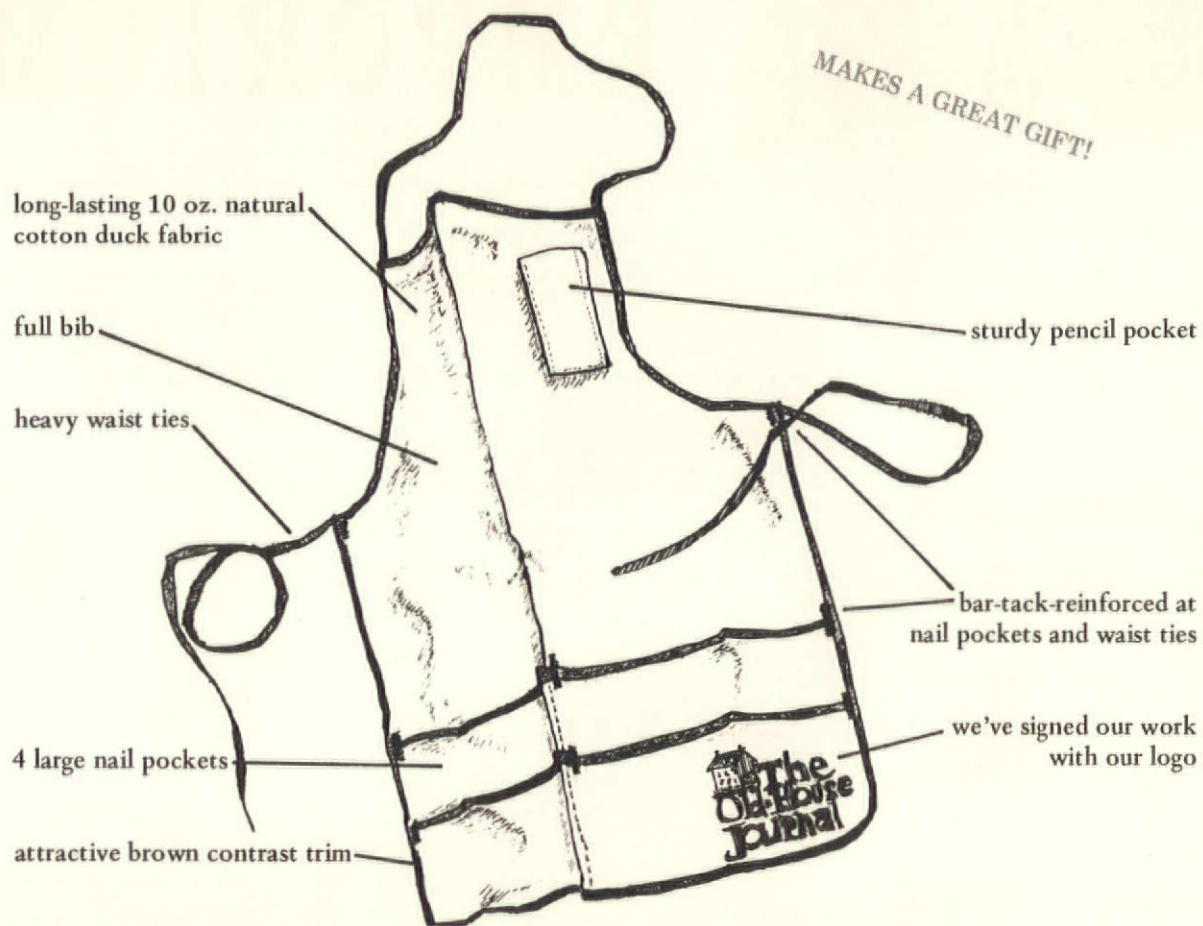
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Write: Emporium Editor, Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217.

FOR SALE

COMPLETE SET—33 lengths—Joseph DuFour wallpapers in Grissaille, entitled "Vues D'Italie," c. 1821. Unrestored condition. F. Whitaker, 3 Cavendish Pl., Bath, Avon, England. Telephone: Bath 331452.

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ANTIQUe ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE, large inventory. Matching sets knobs/back plates; 22 at \$900, 7 at \$280, 5 with locks at \$275. SASE, \$1.00 for photo. Send list, photo of your needs and we'll try to match or locate. We also buy hardware. Moes Enterprises, 1220 E. 4th, Olympia, WA 98506. (206) 357-7358.

VICTORIAN EXTERIOR DOORS: 1) colored and etched glass lights, recessed panels, 2 ft. 10 in. x 6 1/2 ft. x 1 1/4 in., \$35. 2) 3 lower panels, single light upper \$25. Also fireplace crane, 4 ft. long, \$50; matched pair Victorian steam radiators, 6-tube, 3 ft. 2 in. high x 1 ft. 3 in. wide x 7 in. deep, \$50; one 8-tube, 2 ft. 7 in. x 1 ft. 9 in. x 8 in., \$25. M. Olsen, (201) 439-3529.

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VICTORIAN SCREEN DOOR PLAN BOOK. Featuring 6 different designs taken from actual doors, 7 full size drawings of authentic brackets, 7 spindle designs, ideas on adding storm windows to your door. Suppliers of brackets and spindles included. \$5. Dan Miller, 417 Algona, Elgin, IL 60120. (312) 697-3370.

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CHICAGO: Internship positions with Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp. available. 2-mo. training program beginning April 4, 1982. Seeking persons with existing construction/rehabilitation skills, will orient them for working with a Neighborhood Housing Service Corp. (NHS) program. Salary \$1000 per month during training; \$14,000-18,000 when placed permanently. Applicants must have degree or equivalent experience in residential housing construction or rehabilitation. Send resumes to: Janet Curry, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp., 127 North Dearborn St., Suite 1228, Chicago, IL 60602. Deadline for receipt of applications is January 8, 1982.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

ANNUAL XMAS CANDLELIGHT TOUR of Marietta on Sunday, Dec. 6. Located in Lancaster County, PA, Marietta has a National Historic District including most of this year's Federal & Victorian open homes. Contact: Marietta Restoration Associates, PO Box 3, Marietta, PA 17547. (717) 426-1694.

REAL ESTATE

VICTORIAN SPLENDOR in North Plainfield, NJ. Set in an Historic District, expansive five-bedroom home with four fireplaces, parquet floors, many architectural details; terraced gardens bordering on park reserve. Near school. \$109,000. Rorden Realty, Inc., 44 Elm St., Westfield, NJ 07090. (201) 232-8400.

SEVEN OAKS PARK, situated on a lovely secluded lot. 7 bedroom Georgian Colonial features exquisite architectural details. The finest turn-of-the-century craftsmanship makes each of its huge rooms a work of art. Kitchen & bath are handsomely updated. \$160,000. Burdoff Realtors, Short Hills Office, (201) 376-5200.

COUNTRY VICTORIAN FARMHOUSE. c.1860's in the foothills of Western ME. 9 rooms, 1 full bath with 6 acres. 1 hr. drive from the "Whites" or Rangleys areas. \$65,000. Additional land avail. Richard R. Roberts, PO Box 401, Dixfield, ME 04224. (207) 562-8358.



CANDIA, NH 2-storey Colonial home with large barn on 5.09 acres, approx. 150 to 200 years old. House is livable and would be a good restoration project. Located just 10 miles from Manchester. \$44,900. Michael Sorel Realtor, 1345 D.W. Hwy., Nr. Manchester, NH 03104. (603) 623-8822.



MECHANICSBURG, PA—Stately 10-bedroom, 5½-bath mansion on 15 acres of land. At least 200 mature trees. 2 ponds, 1 with fountain. Formal dining room with original murals, beamed ceiling, sculptured panelling, and leaded glass breakfront. Fireplace in both library and living room. Contact Bill Smith, Jack Gaughen Realtor, 3800 Market St., PO Box 686, Camp Hill, PA 17011. (717) 761-4800.

ROCKFORD, SURRY COUNTY, NC: 4 National Register District properties available. Exterior stabilization completed; interior restoration needed. Restoration may apply toward lease or purchase price. Potential tax incentive for commercial rehabilitation. Small 1790s river village near Winston-Salem. Contact E.B. Holyfield, (919) 374-2502 afternoons, evenings.

HOME BUILT BEFORE 1837. Well preserved, on 1-1/3 acres in Dix Hills, Huntington, Long Island, NY. Listed with National Register. \$175,000. Contact: Mrs. Dolores Fust, 395 Half Hollow Road, Dix Hills, L.I., NY 11746. (516) 549-2628, 549-4841.



CATSKILL CLASSIC (former parsonage). Four bedrooms, 2 baths, formal dining, library, living room, kitchen with wainscotted pantry. Leaded glass windows, beautiful natural woodwork, fully insulated. 2-car garage, 2 outbuildings. On 1.5 landscaped acres. Needs some work. \$56,500. C. Anderson, PO Box 26, Shokan, NY 12481. (914) 657-6459.

TURN-OF-CENTURY HOME—Large 1-acre lot. Close to school and churches. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths. Fireplaces in all rooms except kitchen. \$28,000. Louise T. Gerald, Rt. 1, Box 8, Perdido, AL 36562. (205) 937-3165.

FOR RENT: 210-year-old original log cabin, lovingly restored. On 6 lush acres, pond, brook, near wildlife preserve. 2-3 bedrooms, Croton-On-Hudson, NY, vicinity. Westchester County, 55 min. from NYC. Oct.-July \$850 mo. (212) 260-7967 anytime; (914) 762-7521 weekends.

RIVERVIEW TOWER, Marietta, Lancaster County, PA. Stone Victorian mansion on 5.2 acres. 4-storey tower overlooks Susquehanna River. Original woodwork, fixtures, herringbone oak foyer. Tennis court, 22 x 48 pool, sauna. Eminently qualified for National Register. A truly unique period residence. \$260,000. Lease w/option possible. Bob Ramsay, Realvest Realtors, 150 Farmington Lane, Lancaster, PA 17601. (717) 569-4575.

WANTED

4 ROUND PORCH COLUMNS (7½ ft. including the bases) and 2 ornate gable trim sections. Would also appreciate receiving material price lists, etc., for restoring newly purchased "1900" home in need of everything! Julie Jones, 1676 Smith St., Muskegon, MI 49442.

PAIR OF MATCHED BRASS gas or early electric newel-post lights, 2-3 ft. high. Send photos or drawings to F.L. Meeker, 828 East Adams, Muncie, IN 47305. (317) 289-5635.

ANTIQUE DOOR KNOBS of any kind. Will answer all replies. Would appreciate receiving a picture. Darrell O. RaZor, PO Box 456, Bellevue, WA 98009.

SHINGLES—Source for machine-milled, 1 in. thick, 2 ft. long wood shingle, preferably stump-split. Ms. Mary Jo Kimball, 2205 Weatherbee, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (817) 926-4465; 332-7872.

ANTIQUE HOUSE & SHOP/BARN in good repair on Route 6A, Cape Cod, MA. For use as antique shop in summer. Send photo if possible. T. Irick, 12703 Cutten Road, Houston, TX 77066.

MAPLE WOOD ¾ in. x 6 in. x 36 in. and ¼ in. x 15 in. x 10 in. to restore very old commode. If I can get some old wood, I'd be jubilant. Hazel Kemp, 11152 Lee Box Canyon Rd., Forestville, CA 95436.

ANTIQUE HOUSE & SHOP/BARN in good repair in or near Asheville, NC, on major thruway with good traffic. Will use as home & antique shop. Send photo if possible. T. Irick, 12703 Cutten Rd., Houston TX 77066.

POCKET (SLIDING) or other parlor doors that can be used in opening 79 in. wide x 83 in. high. Contact S. Sachs, 29 S. Main St., Cranbury, NJ 08512. (201) 655-1642.

OLD GAS OR WOOD RANGE in good condition. Contact Louise T. Gerald, Rt. 1, Box 8, Perdido, AL 36562. (205) 937-3165.



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PLASTER ORNAMENTATION—Plaster detail restored, including mouldings, cornices, medallions, and decorative bas relief. Missing ornaments replaced. Custom designing available. For information contact: Geoffrey Kaslof, 1715 President St., Brooklyn, NY 11213. (212) 774-2695.

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For further details, see page 217C of the Sept., 1981 issue.

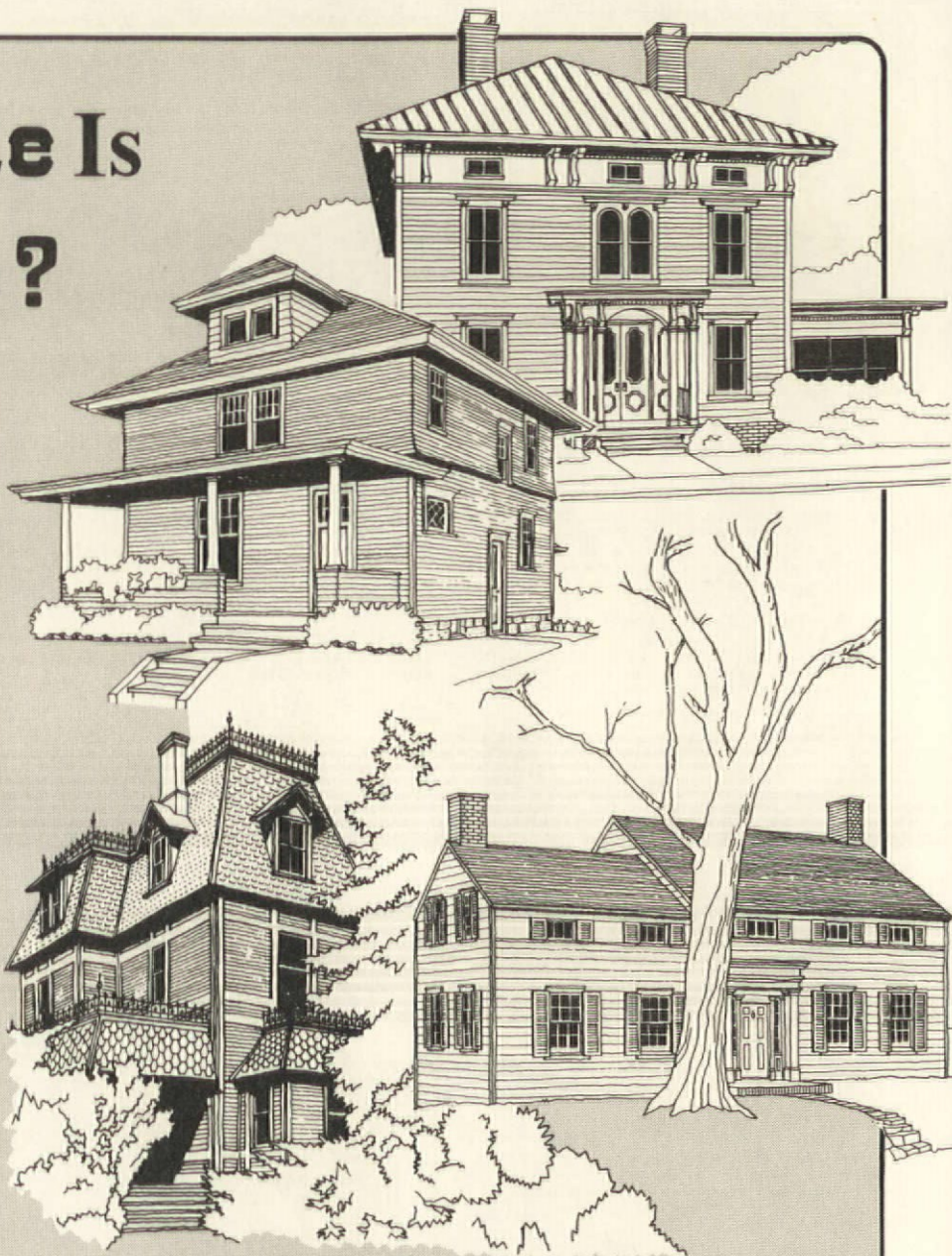
What Style Is My House?



The most common question asked of us at *The Old-House Journal* is "What style is my house?" Subscribers nationwide are curious — they send us photographs all the time, trying to learn the answer.

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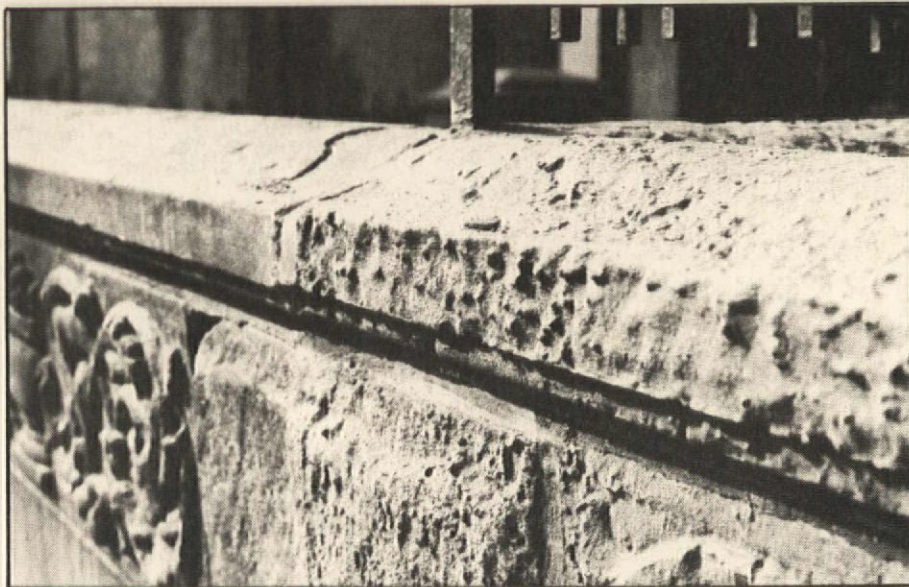
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Opinion...

Remuddling

— Of The Month —



Severe pitting of the sandblasted stone can be seen by comparison with untouched section at left.

IN SPITE OF repeated warnings from every quarter--including the OHJ--people are still sandblasting masonry. The unhappy winner of this month's Remuddling Award wanted to remove paint from his front steps made of sandstone. A contractor assured him that sandblasting would be quick, effective and cheap--an irresistible combination.

THE PROCESS WAS QUICK--but not very effective, nor was it cheap in the long run. Although as much as half an inch of the soft sandstone was removed in places, some paint remained in the recesses of the carvings.

WORST OF ALL, the sandblasted surface of the once-smooth sandstone now looked like the cra-



These portland cement patches had been made by a previous owner before the steps were painted. Sandblasting exposed them, to the present owner's dismayed surprise.

ters of the moon.

FACED WITH this disaster, what did the owner do? You guessed it: He painted the steps again. However, the sandblasting has permanently scarred the stone in ways that no paint can cover up.

--C.L.

SEND US YOUR WORST

YOU ARE INVITED to submit photos of remuddling or technological trashing. Subtle examples--as well as flagrant disasters--are invited. The most important thing is that the photo should have a lesson to teach us all. When possible, submit before and after pictures. (A before photo can be one of a similar unremuddled house in the same neighborhood.)

THE EDITORS will pay \$50 for each contribution accepted. Ordinarily, we'll credit you in print. However, we can also grant anonymity if you request it. We won't identify the remuddled building in print. But please provide all relevant information about the structure with your photos.

SEND YOUR candidates to: Remuddling Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.



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