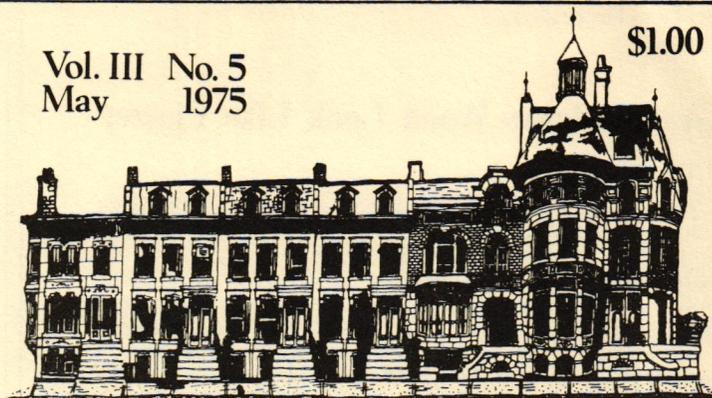


THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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Renovation And Maintenance Ideas For The Antique House



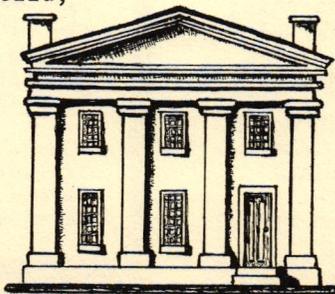
Greek Revival Decoration

by Carolyn Flaherty

MORE OLD HOUSES WERE BUILT, and converted to, the Greek Revival style than any other type in America. For decades it was our national style and had its own particular form of decoration. And yet this style of interior decoration, so appropriate to the classical features of the Greek Revival interior, has been curiously neglected. Old-house owners have often wondered why the popular Early American and Victorian colors and furnishings do not quite "fit" in their Grecian-style houses. A room of this period may be wanting a touch of the Greek to bring out its original character.

HOUSES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS imitating classic Greek architecture were built in every part of the country, from 1820 to 1840. Towns that were just beginning during the period were built entirely in the Greek style, often having Greek names as well—Troy, Euclid, Ithaca, Athens. The style lingered until the Civil War, particularly in the middle and western parts of the country.

THE MOOD OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE played an important part in the Greek mania. There was a revolt against British imitation, formerly so popular, after the unpleasantness of the War of 1812. Nor did they care too much for the imperious



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Coming Next Month

HOW TO GRAIN LIKE A PROFESSIONAL

Napoleon. On the other hand, Americans were in sympathy with the Greek people's struggle for freedom. The columns, porticos and colonnades that appeared in such profusion were thought to symbolize the democratic principles of the ancient culture. Men like Jefferson believed the temple style to be the perfect expression of the ideals of the American republic.

THERE WERE ALSO MORE PRACTICAL REASONS why the Greek Revival house became as popular as today's ranch house. House builders built for clients who wanted a maximum of impressiveness with a minimum of cost. The white columns—round and square, plain and fluted—that held up the classic triangular pediment were certainly impressive. And they could be executed with great economy for the sugar planter, banker or farmer alike, all of whom deemed them appropriate.

AS TRAINED ARCHITECTS WERE RARE, the builders required a style that was easily translated into their own vernacular. The temple style, particularly in its simplest form of adding a few columns or pilasters to a new or existing box-type house, fit the bill. It could also be built in wood—an important factor in a tree-rich country. Books by Asher Benjamin and Minard Lafever
(Continued on page 9)

Gesso Makes Wood Look Like Plaster

To The Editor:

If you are replacing damaged plaster moldings with sections built up from stock wood moldings, you can give the wood the smoothness of plaster by applying a coat or two of acrylic gesso. This is a white plaster-like substance that is used mainly by artists to seal canvas to accept oil paints. Gesso can be obtained from any well-stocked art supply store.

Originally, gesso was a mixture of plaster, white lead and oil, and among other things old-time woodworkers would use it to disguise lousy joinery and to conceal rough wood surfaces.

Jay W. Hedden, Editor
Workbench Magazine

Banishing Bats From The Belfry

To The Editor:

Re Martin Sleeman's problem with bats in the house, I've had considerable experience with them. The first principle is to encourage them to move...not to kill them...since a single bat will eat up to 1,500 insects in one night. Rabid bats are quite rare, and all but unheard-of in the north.

To evict a bunch of bats, plug all holes around windows, fascias, cornices, chimney flashings, soffits, etc., that are larger than a nickel. If you wait for the cold weather, most—if not all—of the free-loading tenants will have moved south in search of food so they won't be trapped inside the structure. Another common place for bats to hang out is in a seldom-used chimney. To discourage bats here, cover the top of the chimney with an inverted box made of ¼-in. screening.

If you inadvertently trap some of the critters in the chimney or other space, it's not too serious. They will die, but because they are in a dry place and are also quite small, they will not emit any noticeable odor.

Neal P. Kingsley
Lansdowne, Pa.

A Wood Filler From The Auto Store

To The Editor:

In restoring my 1836 ante-bellum home, one of my most useful discoveries came quite by accident: I found that an auto metal-patching compound called "Cuz" was the best material to use in patching damaged woodwork. All delicate molding—both interior and exterior—was reconstructed with this product. It sets up quite rapidly to a rock-hard substance. Before it completely hardens, you can take a chisel or other tool and give it the final shape. When painted over, you can't tell where the patch leaves off and the good wood begins.

Terry E. Fish
Bolivar, Tenn.

THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

Published Monthly For People Who Love Old Houses

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A Quandry: Cracks Between Floorboards

To The Editor:

The flooring in my 1850's farmhouse has shrunk, allowing cold damp air from the crawl space below the floor to blow up through the cracks. My only thought is to add roofing paper to the underside of the floor and use some sort of filler in the cracks. What would be a good filler for this purpose?

Phil Walton
Manchester, N. H.

We've heard of fillers using sawdust plus white glue, varnish or shellac as binders. Also cloth strips plus glue. Anyone come up with a really successful solution? -- Ed.

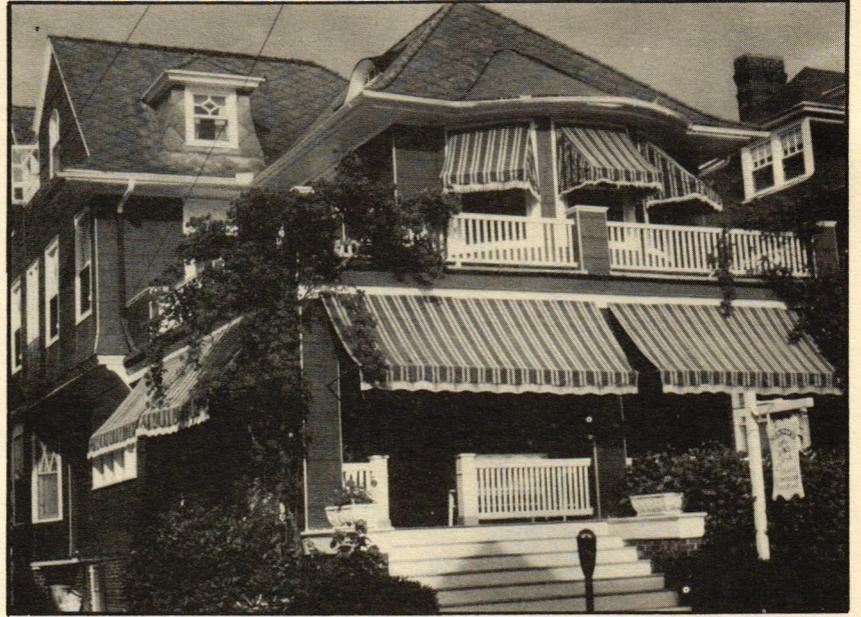
2nd National Conference On Restoring City Neighborhoods

ON SEPT. 26-29, 1975 there will be a national conference in St. Paul, Minn., of individuals and groups involved in the "Back To The City" movement. The conference will dwell on the practical aspects of moving into old urban structures and neighborhoods.

AMONG THE TOPICS to be examined at the four-day conclave: Influencing and changing public policy; implications of displacement of the poor; financing; quality of craftsmanship; effective techniques for neighborhood associations. There will also be tours of neighborhoods in St. Paul and Minneapolis.

FOR DETAILS about the program and registration information, contact: Joanna Baymiller, Old Town Restorations, 158 Farrington St., St. Paul, Minn. 55102.

Self-Supporting Shingle-Style Seaside Cottage



By Claire Wood Labine

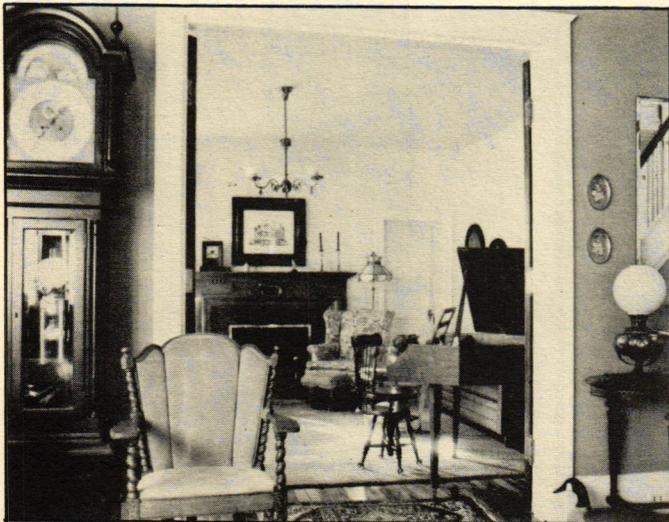
THE HOUSE CALLED THE MAINSTAY was built as a summer retreat in 1905 on Cape May, N.J., with 18 rooms and 9 baths by a Philadelphia lawyer who was clearly serious about going to the beach. Enhanced by awnings, roses, hydrangeas, hanging baskets, and wicker furniture arranged on everyman's fantasy of a front porch, it is now a wonderfully inviting guest house...because the only way its young owners, Tom and Sue Carroll, could afford an old-house purchase-and-restoration was if the house did its share.

ANY INITIAL RESERVATIONS the Carrolls may have had about opening their home to paying guests vanished somewhere during their 3½ years at The Mainstay. The people who come to Cape May are by and large old-house lovers, Victoriana enthusiasts, sensitive to the

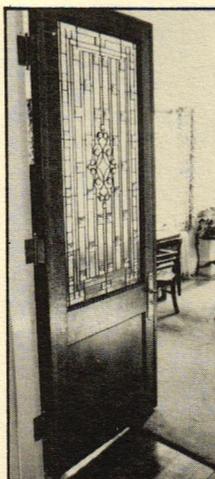


Carrolls' work on preservation and decoration of The Mainstay, and the kind of folk who tend to make their own beds and empty wastepaper baskets (neither of which, of course, the management expects them to do). The result has been that Tom and Sue feel they have an ever-widening circle of friends with mutual interests, as well as the "big old monster of a house" they had always wanted.

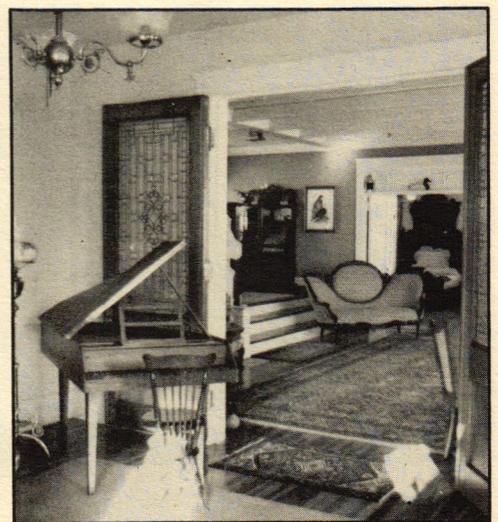
FROM GRADUATE SCHOOL at Eastern Tennessee, the Carrolls came to Cape May while Tom attended the Coast Guard Officer Candidate School. The present Mayor of the town talked them into staying and enthusiastically reinforced their purchase of the house on Jackson Street a half-block from the beach. The Carrolls dug in for six months at hard labor and were ready for guests the following summer. Much of their work was simply to



Looking from front hall into study, one sees the result of many antiquing trips.



New acquisition: Leaded glass doors in study.



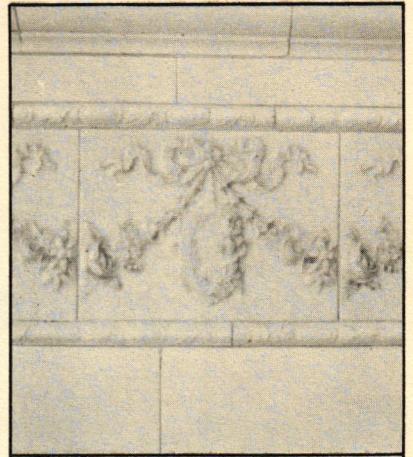
Homemade harpsichord adds a musical note to the study.



Landing at foot of main staircase features two stained glass windows. Colorful glass is The Mainstay's trademark.



Stained glass boat (detail from window at left) is one reason the sailing Carrolls loved the house.



Molded Victorian tiles in 2nd floor bathroom had been totally hidden with thick paint.

undo damage wrought by prior owners. The most depressing part of the whole experience was their first survey of what lay ahead.

INTERIOR WOODWORK around most of the 64 windows in the house was covered with tenacious contact paper. The oak mantel was thickly painted green, while the green tiles surrounding the same fireplace were thickly painted red. Beautifully molded Victorian bathroom tiles were so heavily caked with paint that the Carrolls at first didn't realize they were there. Floors and walls were in fair shape, as were wiring and plumbing, although several of the showers had a tendency to unleash cataracts onto the ground floor below. Their first night in the house the Carrolls couldn't sleep, undone at the thought

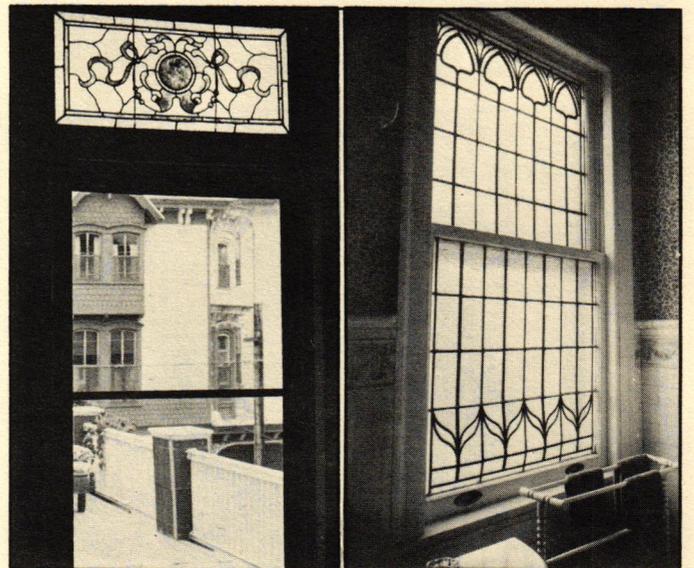
that they had actually bought the place. They staggered from bed the next morning to find themselves overrun with cockroaches and the furniture due to arrive that afternoon. An exterminator got there in time.

EXTENSIVE WORK ON THE HOUSE actually continued past the arrival of the first guests, so that Tom occasionally found himself on an extension ladder and caulking the frame of a guestroom window as he apologized to the occupant within.

DECORATION OF THE HOUSE continues as the Carrolls add to their collection of Victorian furniture and artifacts. Since all but two of the original lighting fixtures had been removed, a large portion of the furnishing bud-



Master bedroom at The Mainstay shows the Carrolls' passion for Victorian furnishings—and Tom's dexterity in rewiring old gas lighting fixtures.



Stained glass panel over guestroom door (left) was one that the Carrolls purchased and installed. Window in 2nd floor bathroom (right) is original to the house.



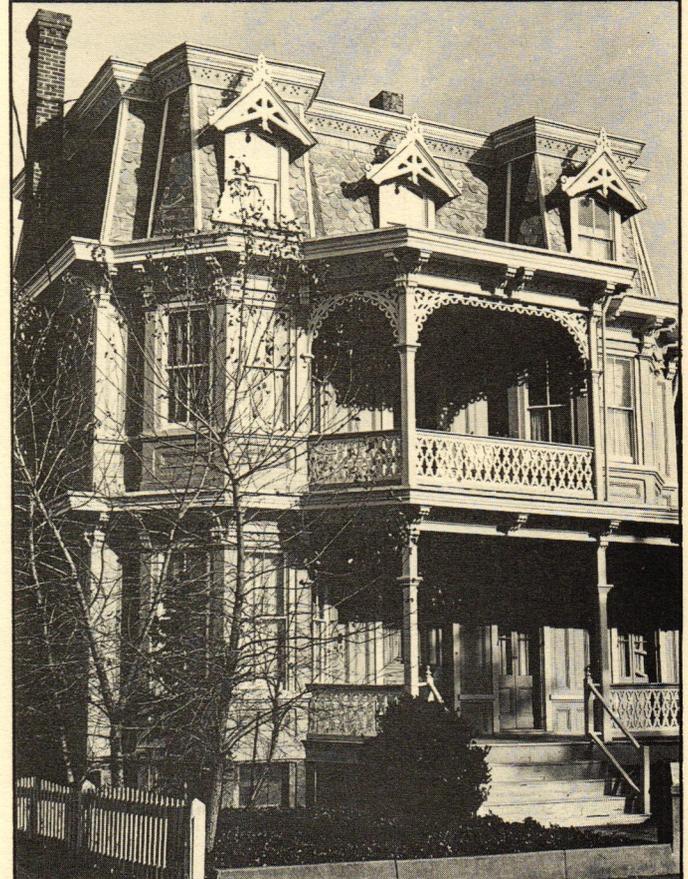
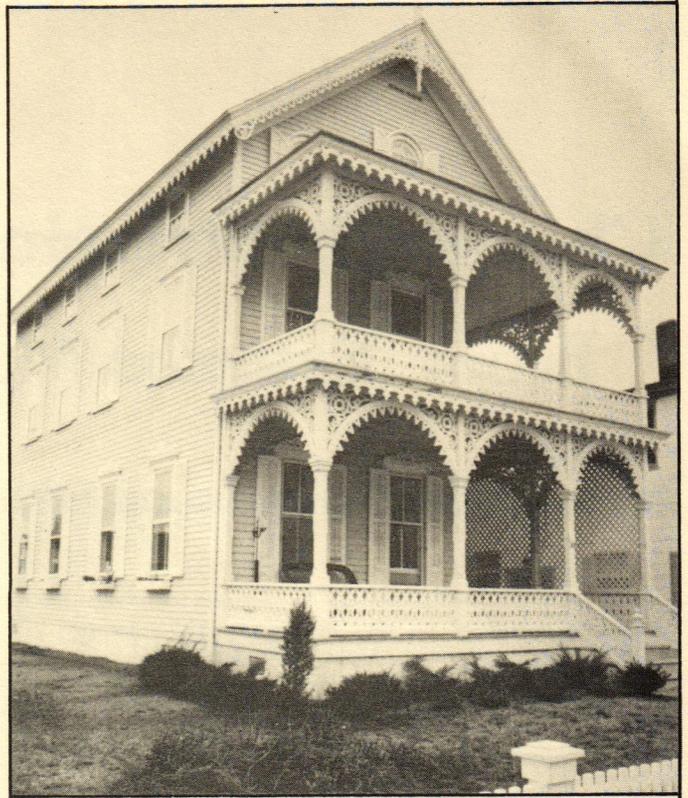
The Carrolls restore bicycles as well as houses. Tom has ridden this 1890 model (called "The Ordinary" because 3 million were made) in Cape May parades.

get has gone into their replacements. Tom has become an expert at electrifying gas and oil fixtures; his favorite tool is the buffing wheel he uses to polish the old brass.

THE ASPECT OF THEIR HOUSE that the Carrolls say they enjoy most are its windows, which come in a dazzling variety of sizes and shapes—and with especially interesting glass. A frequent and favorite guest is a New York toy manufacturer whose avocation is the care and repair of leaded glass and who has invested many hours of work on The Mainstay windows in exchange for vacation weekends—an arrangement that both parties find highly rewarding.

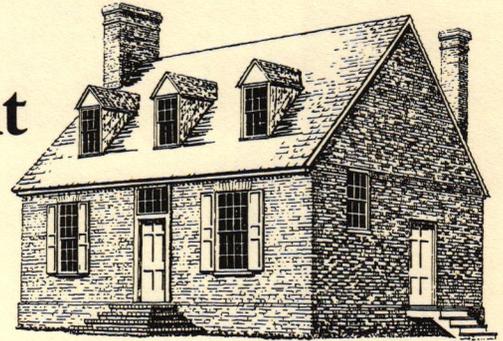
THE CARROLLS' OTHER PASSIONS, sailing and bicycling, dovetail smoothly with The Mainstay business. On spring and fall week-ends they entertain bicycle clubs from all over the Mid-Atlantic area, sometimes having as many as 50 cyclists for continental breakfast on the front porch. Friends have laughingly accused Tom and Sue of simply arranging their lives so their hobbies make a living for them. But their experience at The Mainstay goes beyond that: It is a commitment to old-house restoration and the health of one of the finest Victorian seashore communities in the country. ■

If any of The Journal's readers would like to see the fabulous Victorian architecture of Cape May and stay at The Mainstay, you can contact Tom and Sue Carroll at: The Mainstay, 24 Jackson St., Cape May, N.J. 08204. Tel. (609) 884-8690.



Much Cape May Victorian architecture was built in the 10 years after 1878, when a fire had leveled the town. Then a very posh resort community, cottage owners vied to see who could produce the most elaborate sawn wood ornamentation.

Chemically Stripping Paint From Exterior Masonry



EDITOR'S NOTE: In the February 1975 issue, Theodore Prudon outlined the hazards involved in removing paint from exterior brickwork. This article discusses the best methods to use when the owner determines that paint removal is the best course.

By James G. Diedrich,
American Building Restoration, Inc.

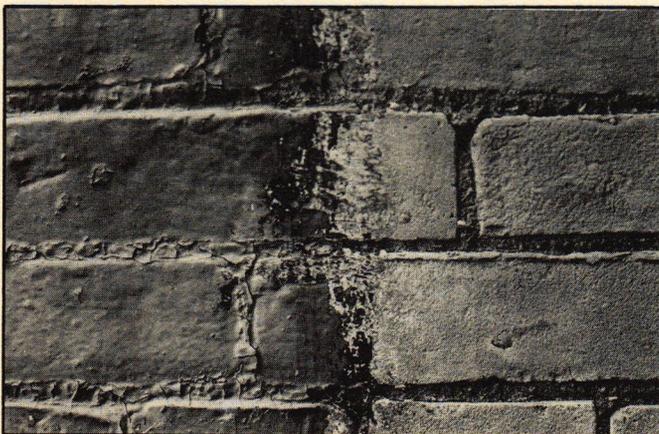
PEOPLE WHO OWN PAINTED BRICK structures can derive four basic benefits from stripping off the paint layers and getting down to bare brick: (1) Long-term maintenance is simplified; (2) The architectural integrity of the building is enhanced; (3) The texture and color of the brick and mortar almost always have more visual appeal than the color that comes from a paint can; (4) Restoration of the original brickwork invariably increases public admiration and appreciation of the structure.

REMOVING PAINT FROM BRICKWORK is not a project to be undertaken lightly, however. There are two basic approaches: Mechanical removal (sand-

blasting) and chemical stripping. Although every project has its special problems, in most instances chemical stripping is the best approach. There are 5 ingredients to a successful paint stripping job:

- Time
- Some allowance of money
- A contractor's professional stripping formula (not a paint store product)
- Some training in use of the stripper
- A love for and appreciation of the original brick structure

OF COURSE, it is always possible to simply scrape and re-paint a structure that is already painted. But in the long run I feel this is not desirable. First, and most important, the brick and stone in most old structures—especially those of the 19th century—was intended to be seen. It is true that the old European technique of painting the brick and pencilling the joints in white was used on some structures in America. But it was not widespread. More important, maintaining and repainting this kind of detailed



Ten coats of paint were removed from this patch of Milwaukee Cream City brick with one application of ABR stripper—followed by washing and neutralizing.



Sandblasting to remove paint can have disastrous results—as in this particularly horrible example from an 1890 brick church in Milwaukee.

color scheme gets prohibitively expensive—especially as paint layers build up and cracking and peeling get to be more of a problem. And many people—me included—find this kind of painted brickwork aesthetically unappealing.

BECAUSE OF THE HIGH COST of painting the mortar joints, today paint is almost invariably applied over both the bricks and the mortar—thus eliminating the decorative relationship between the two. To me, this is an insult to the integrity of the building.

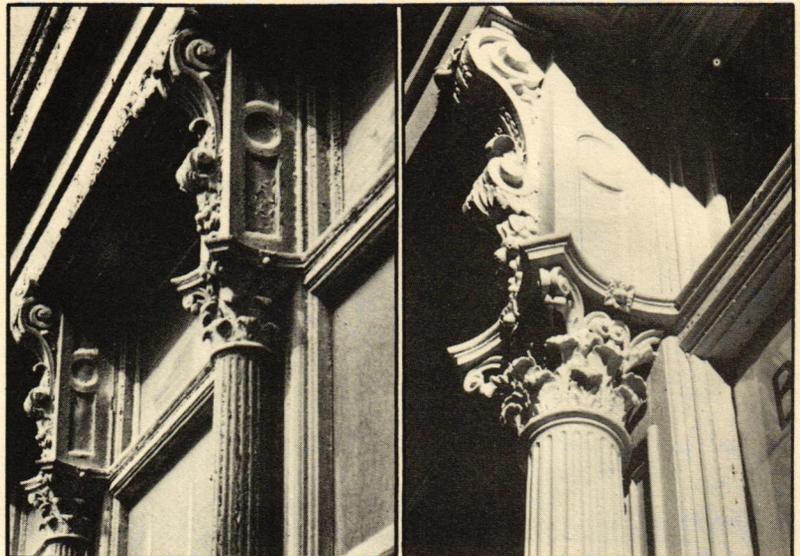
WHEN A BRICK STRUCTURE needs waterproofing, painting may be the least expensive solution—for the short term. But painting isn't even the simplest answer. Many of the commercial sealers are easier to apply than paint. You can do it yourself with an ordinary 2-3-gal. garden sprayer. And a good recommended sealer can have double the lifespan of most paint films. It's not uncommon for paint to start flaking and peeling within 2-4 years on brick.

ALTHOUGH IT HAS A LONG HISTORY as an exterior sealer, paint is less than a totally satisfactory material. As a surface film it will also lock water in the brick, and we have seen cases of serious deterioration of brick that occurred beneath the painted surface. Masonry must be allowed to breathe.

ONCE PAINT STARTS TO PEEL—as it will on older, soft common brick—it requires constant maintenance to keep the paint film intact. So you get into a constant cycle of scraping, wire-brushing and repainting. Patch-painting isn't very satisfactory, because the sun fades paint and the touched-up areas stand out like freckles. And if the whole surface is re-coated, after this sequence is repeated a number of times you end up with layer piled upon layer—which then begins to crack and look like a dried lake bed. Successive paint coatings then get thicker and thicker in hopes of filling in the cracks. The end result of this relentless process is a painted surface that looks like alligator skin. So even a confirmed enthusiast for painting eventually has to confront the necessity of removing old paint from a building—even if he just wants to paint it again.

IF A BRICK STRUCTURE is only dirty, please just clean it; don't start the paint covering process! Chemical cleaning of brick is a simple and inexpensive process...and can be handled as a do-it yourself project.

HOMEMADE FORMULAS for stripping paint from brick are not recommended. The article in the February 1975 Journal discussed the dangers in uncontrolled use of lye. Exterior paint stripping can be handled as a do-it-yourself job, however, if you have professionally formulated chemicals and take the time to learn how to use them properly. The ABR strippers are formulations of caustic mixed with emulsifiers, neutralizers



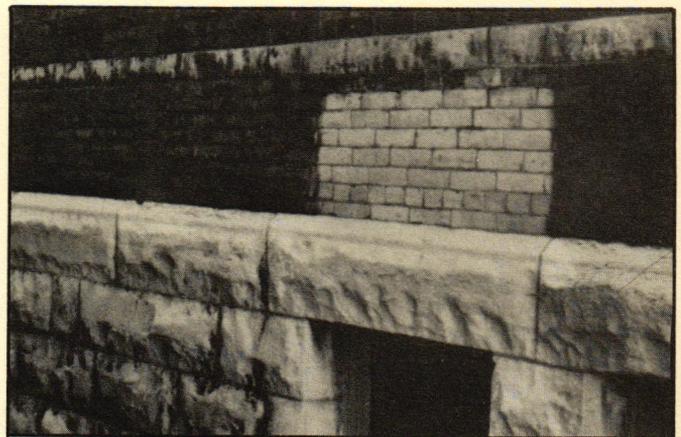
Prior to repainting (right), 25 layers of peeling, cracked paint were removed from the cast iron columns and surrounding wood and sheet metal on this commercial building. Two applications of chemical stripper were required.

plus a compound to make it thicker or thinner. The material is quite safe to use. I personally have been splashed in the face and hands with the stuff in my enthusiasm to get on with a job, and it washes right off with no ill effects.

Applying The Stripper

EVERY JOB HAS ITS OWN PECULIARITIES, but in general here are the steps we go through in attacking a masonry stripping job: (1) By scraping out a paint chip, we get an idea of the number of layers of paint on the structure. This gives us an indication of how tough the job is going to be and whether it's likely that two coats of stripper will be required.

(2) Based on the finding in (1), we mix up a test batch of stripper, increasing the viscos-



Sometimes paint isn't the problem...just years of accumulated dirt and grime. This test patch shows how a chemical cleaner will quickly restore the original look.



Acidic brick cleaner (which also serves as neutralizer for the caustic paint stripper) can be applied with a brush or ordinary garden sprayer.



Thorough flushing of the brick cleaner requires a high-pressure (300-500 psi.) hose to remove all surface dirt. This equipment can be rented.

ity (using methyl cellulose to make it thicker) in proportion to the number of paint layers to be removed. With higher viscosity, a thicker layer of the stripper will stick to the side of the structure.

(3) We next try out a sample of the stripper on a test patch to see how long it takes to soak through all the layers. This can be as little as 1 hr. or as much as 24 hr. We find that 60% of the jobs we tackle can be handled with one application of stripper. Where more than one coat is required, we thoroughly wash off the first coating and all the softened paint residue, then apply the second coat.

(4) With the test results in hand, you're ready to apply the stripper to the building. This can be done with a large soft-bristle brush like a whitewash brush. For faster application, you can use a paint sprayer with the nozzle taken off so that the material flows onto the wall.

IF THE STRIPPER HAS TO STAY ON THE WALL for a number of hours, the surface may dry out—especially if it is exposed to direct sun. The surface of the stripper should be re-wet by lightly fogging with a fine water spray from a hose.

Where To Get Stripping Chemicals

American Building Restoration, Inc., is now setting up a distribution system to sell the stripping chemicals it has been using in its own restoration business. There are currently dealers in Wisconsin, Ohio and Minnesota. For information on how to obtain these materials, write: James G. Diedrich, Vice President, American Building Restoration, 3309 West Acre Avenue, Franklin, Wisconsin 53132.

(5) When the paint is totally softened, the stripper plus dissolved paint is hosed off the wall. You can use an ordinary garden hose with normal pressure. But it goes a lot faster if you use a high-pressure hose with 300-500 psi. water. This kind of equipment can be rented. If a second coat of stripper is needed, this is the time to put it on.

(6) As soon as possible after hosing off the paint and stripper, the neutralizing acid is applied. A non-controlled acid, such as muriatic, will etch the mortar joints and possibly burn the bricks. We use our ABR 101 brick cleaner—which contains mild acids plus controlling agents—as the neutralizer. This can be put on with a large brush, or can be flowed on with a pressure sprayer.

THE NEUTRALIZER can be washed off within minutes of being applied. A high-pressure hose (300-500 psi.) definitely should be used for this operation. Reason: The neutralizing solution will also clean the dirt off the masonry, but the dirt particles can only be dislodged by high-pressure water.

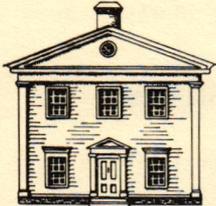
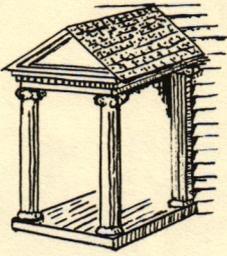
BECAUSE THE STRIPPER DISSOLVES THE PAINT, clean-up is not a problem. If the residue is flowing onto a sidewalk, just wet the pavement beforehand and flush the material to a drain. There will be no stain. If the residue is falling onto earth, just thoroughly soak the ground in advance. The material will disperse into the ground quite neatly. Although plants and shrubs should be protected with plastic sheeting, the neutralizing agents in the stripper keep it from harming the soil—unlike lye stripping agents. ■

James G. Diedrich is Vice President of American Building Restoration, Inc., a restoration contracting and consulting firm. The company manufactures its own paint removing chemicals.

(Greek Revival—Cont'd from page 1)

were published as "Builder's Guides." They included instructions on basic geometry and gave drawings of classic and their own versions of "classic" columns, mantels, pediments, etc., to be used by local carpenter-builders around the country.

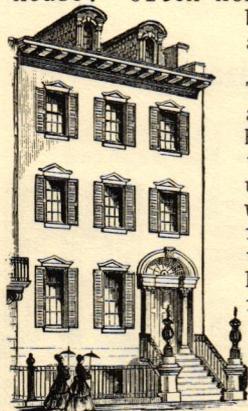
ONE OF THE MOST COMMON features of the style was the portico—a covered or roofed space at the entrance. It was held up by 2, 4 or more columns. In its simplest version, it was often grafted onto a plain colonial style house to give it the "modern" Greek look.



IF A HOUSE DID NOT FEATURE a portico, it at least had corner pilasters and a suggestion of the classical pediment by emphasis on the gable end of the house. Heavy cornices were used on the gable, with the amount of classical detailing depending on the cost of the house.

A POPULAR AND LOW-COST VERSION of the Greek Revival was the story-and-a-half house. It managed to have all the worst features of the style as far as comfort was concerned, while adding a few of its own. In this type there was only one one main story recessed behind white columns of the same height. The half story, usually the children's and servants' rooms, crouched in the triangular half story, pierced by small, often round, windows. The low pitched roof, covered with tin, made these rooms oven-temperature in summer, and tended to sag and leak under the snow in winter. But since it was the comfort of the children and servants that was sacrificed to fashion, the story-and-a-half house remained popular. The parlors and "master chambers" were on the main floor.

THE COLUMNED FRONT OF THE HOUSE admitted little sunlight to the interior—a fact that was not acknowledged until the Greek style began to decline. There were also certain oddities connected with the attempt at classical symmetry. Both town and country houses had floor plans with two of everything—two parlors or two matching bedrooms. Additional rooms like the kitchen and pantry had to be fitted in jigsaw fashion to the back of the house. Often non-functioning doors were built to keep a symmetrical appearance.



THE CITY ROW HOUSE was also adapted to the Greek style. Higher ceilings caused them to be taller, and they were usually deeper than they were wide. They had a long, narrow hall to make room for the two symmetrical parlors. The high stoop—a Dutch leftover—remained fashionable in New York, but Philadelphia and Boston built their Greek row houses with white marble steps. Expensive houses

sported a Grecian front door with fluted Ionic columns on each side, supporting a flat entablature. The flat cornices had decorative dentils (small toothlike blocks). Grecian motifs in iron-work decorated fences.

DESPITE THE PREOCCUPATION WITH SYMMETRY, the front door—usually square-headed with vertical side-lights—was moved from the center towards the side of the house. This was actually an experiment in "modernizing"—an attempt to reduce the draft in the rooms caused by the old-fashioned central hallway.

TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION OF STONE, weather-boards were often butt-jointed rather than overlapped, and brickwork was painted white or gray.

The Interior

THE GREEK REVIVAL INTERIOR had a restrained elegance. Color and furnishings gave a look of cool simplicity. Elegance was achieved by symmetry in architectural details and placing of furniture, and the use of similar colors for walls and woodwork and a contrasting color for both upholstery and window hangings, usually in the same design and fabric.

THE PRECEDING FEDERAL PERIOD had been noted for delicacy in design and neo-classical motifs. Many of the first Greek Revival houses were decorated in the Federal style, but as the Greek style became more popular, there was more emphasis placed on purely Grecian

Popular Greek Revival Motifs



Anthemion or honeysuckle, the most popular motif—used on friezes, fences, columns and mantels.



After 1812 the eagle became a popular symbol, first in Federal and then in Greek Revival decoration. It topped mirrors and appeared on mantels and furnishings.



The Greek key fret, interlocking geometric shapes, was used in friezes.



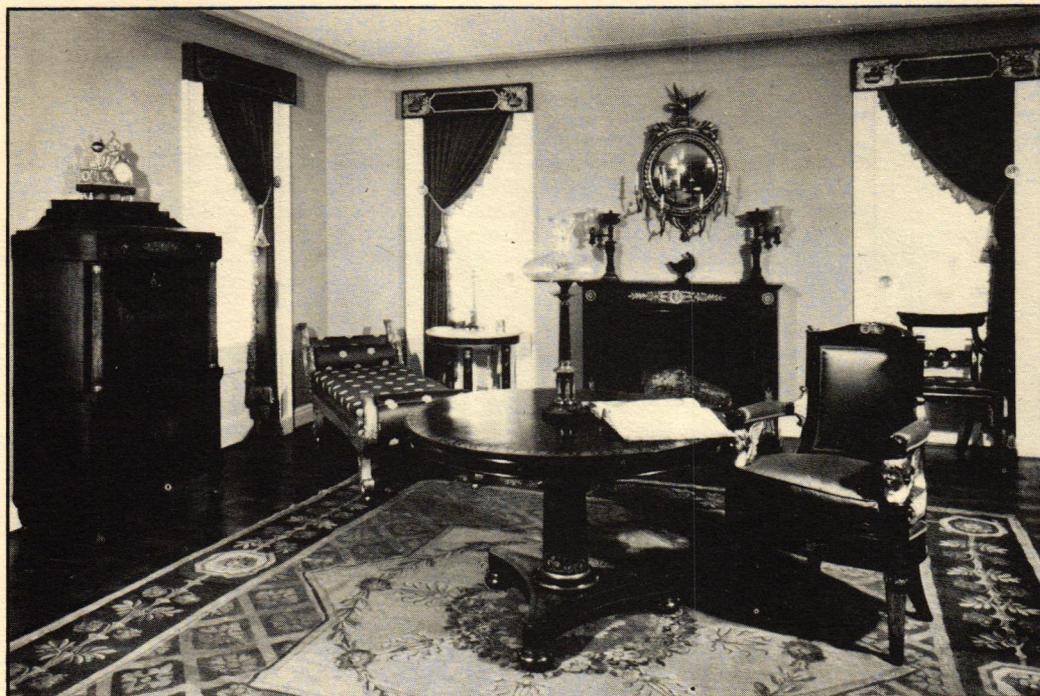
Patera—a round or oval disc, usually ornamented with a rosette in the center. Paterae were especially common on mantelpieces.



The egg and dart molding appeared on columns, friezes, mantels and woodwork of all kinds.



Formal swags decorated mantels and wood trim. Ripe oats, one drooping from another, were most common.



This is a typical Greek Revival Parlor with American Empire furniture and a bulls-eye girandole over the mantel. The fabric is a woven cotton and silk in a dark mossy green. It is used for the chair and window curtains in its plain ground version and with an Empire snowflake design to cover the Grecian sofa. "Davout Snowflake Damask" was re-created by Brunschwig & Fils, Inc., for the Bayou Bend Chillman Empire Parlor in Houston, Texas.

lines and motifs. The influence of the Empire style in France and the Regency in England combined to produce the American Empire. With this style, the furniture that was designed for the Greek Revival houses became heavier and more massive, and eventually became what is now thought of as "Victorian" by mid-century. Because the Greek Revival style in architecture lasted so many years, most houses in the Greek style built in the 50's and 60's were decorated in the Victorian style. But here we will explore that decorative period from 1820 to 1840, when furnishings were still related to the exterior Greek Revival style.

Colors



HE CLASSICAL LOOK REQUIRED a backdrop of pale walls that would simulate the ancient marble or stucco of classical Greece. Painted plaster walls were more in favor than wallpaper. They were tinted in delicate shades of gray, lavender, pink, blue and yellow, with woodwork in the same shade or white. Pale buff walls with white woodwork were used occasionally.

THERE WERE MANY CHANGES IN THE INTERIOR from colonial fashions: Wood panelling was omitted or painted white; the dado disappeared, and high ceilings were decorated with delicate plasterwork, a chandelier hanging from a center rosette. A symmetrical look was achieved by the balanced arrangement of doors, windows, etc. Mantels were smaller and deco-

rated with molded composition in wreaths, swags, honeysuckle and gouged fans and cameo-like discs. Mythological figures and draped Muses graced some mantels.

GRANDER HOMES imitated the cool grandeur of Grecian interiors by marbleizing the columns that often separated parlors and by gilding the tops of columns and mouldings. Hallways often had niches large enough to contain classical sculptures.

Wallpaper

WHEN WALLPAPER WAS USED it was often the expensive and fashionable Chinese landscape type, very popular for large entranceways. Pale-colored papers with vertical lines or classical swags and urns were sometimes used. J. C. Loudon, in his widely-read encyclopedia of home

furnishings specifically recommended types of wallpaper for the room decorated in the Grecian style. He thought "architectural" wallpapers with "sculptured honeysuckle which decorates the many friezes of ancient temples" to be most desirable. For the the hall, he recommended a plain paper in imitation of stone, and graining the woodwork in imitation of oak.

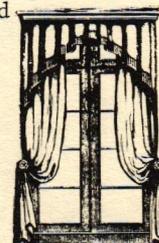


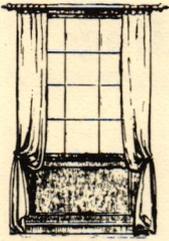
ARCHITECTURAL AND CLASSICAL MOTIF wall-papers are hard to find today. However, pale colors and papers with textured surfaces are easily found. There are also many patterns which have vertical lines and medallion and snowflake-like designs, although they are usually grouped in a "colonial" collection. Any formal paper—like the floral stripes that are still popular—give the cool appearance desired for a Grecian room.

Window Treatments

WINDOWS WERE LARGE AND SLENDER in the Greek Revival house, contributing to the lighter look in interiors. Rich fabrics and strong colors were used to provide accent to their austere settings, although the lines of the drapery were kept simple.

THE OPULENT COLORS OF the French Empire were used in rooms of grand proportions—royal purple, emerald green, wine red, and brilliant





yellows and blues. Most window hangings, however, used fabric in less rich colors—grays, golds, peach, and quieter blues and greens. But the fabrics were elegant and formal. Silk, satin, damask, brocade, taffeta and velvet were the most fashionable and furniture was upholstered in the same fabric and color.



Klismos

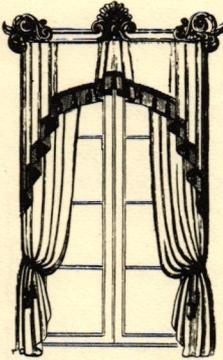
heavier Chippendale style. With the Greek mania, furniture took on the lines of the ancient Greek furniture. The splayed legs of the "klismos" were used in chairs and sofas.



VERY POPULAR WERE SATINS AND TAFFETAS striped or dotted with medallions. Toiles printed with patriotic French and American scenes were used, and are reproduced today by many fabric firms. These scenes were printed on cottons and linens.

THE FRENCH ROD was commonly used in window treatments. Elaborate finials in Empire motifs gave a strong decorative accent. The formal English boxed valance was another elegant treatment, and less expensive windows had plain wood cornices. Wooden cornices were gilded for added elegance.

THE BEAUTIFUL FABRICS USED ON Greek Revival windows were expensive even then, because they were imported and woven with a great deal of real silk. But today, the cost of a heavy damask is mind-boggling. The toiles are more readily available and will probably be found in most stores in a "colonial" grouping. But the key factor—elegance—can be found in ready-made fabrics by using solids with a formal texture, striped patterns, medallion or snowflake designs or chintz in cool colors. Chintz is a popular fabric with decorators who re-furnish period rooms with today's fabrics, often with a floral design in a symmetrically arranged manner such as the "English garden" prints.



Floors

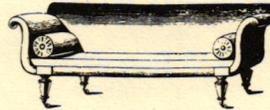
HOKED AND BRAIDED RUGS on painted floors were commonly used in houses until mid-19th century when factory-made carpets were available. Those who could afford them often had "Brussels" carpets or other expensive, imported types.

THERE WAS A FASHION FOR PAINTED FLOORS in large black and white squares in imitation of the marble squares used in grand European parlors. Sometimes the squares were marbleized to make them more like the original, and other color combinations like peach and black or gray and black were used.

Furnishings

IN THE 1820's, when the Greek Revival began to make its appearance, the light and delicate look of the Federal period was still fashionable. Hepplewhite, Sheraton and Phyfe, who had been using Grecian motifs, were the foremost cabinetmakers. They had replaced the

THE TYPICAL PLAIN SOFA of the period was a solidly proportioned piece of furniture with two identical headrests in the forms of scrolls that curved gracefully into the seat rail.



The girandole, a round mirror with the Federal eagle on top, was a particularly popular decorative item. But mirrors in general were

widely used to enhance the spaciousness and elegance desired. Diamond and fan motifs were popular for glass and silver, and earthenware from England displayed figures from the ancient culture or patriotic scenes from American history.

MIRRORS, CHAIRS, SOFAS AND TABLES were used in pairs to create the classical balance and dignity that typified the Greek Revival home. ■

Publications That Can Help

If you have a Greek Revival house, or any other type for that matter, you may well be missing some of the original mouldings. Or ornament may be desired for a frieze, cornice or a mantel that is too plain. The Decorators Supply Corporation has a line of 13,000 patterns of composition carvings for interior and exterior. All of them are pictured in a large artbook which you can order for \$10.00. If you can bear to part with it in 60 days, you can return the catalog and the money will be refunded. A price list accompanies the catalog. Send the \$10.00 to:

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3610-3612 South Morgan Street
Chicago, Illinois 60609

There are two books that were very important to builders in America during the period when Greek Revival houses were built. They have been used by Journal readers to restore or re-create structural elements and architectural details. They contain practical geometry, glossaries, plans, elevations and construction techniques. They are:

The American Builder's Companion
by Asher Benjamin, \$3.50

The Modern Builder's Guide
by Minard Lafever, \$5.00

Both are available from Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York, N. Y. 10014. Add 35¢ for postage and handling.

Products For The Old House



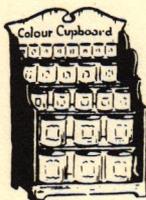
Tin Ceilings

Embossed tin panels were very popular 50-100 years ago, both for new ceilings and to cover damaged plaster. Although still an economical way to decorate in a period style, embossed tin panels are now very hard to come by.

The AA Abbingdon Ceiling Co. carries 24 different patterns, including 13 traditional designs appropriate for Victorian houses. Squares in the designs come in multiples of 6", 12" and 24". Cornice moldings are available in 10 patterns. Most of the 24" by 96" panels sell for \$8.00.

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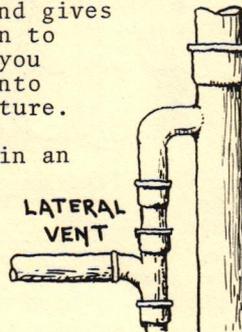
218 RACE ST., PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19106

Rehabilitating Abandoned Buildings

DONALD BRANN did not set out to write a treatise on the architectural fine points of old houses when he put this 258-page volume together. Rather, noting the growing interest in rescuing old structures being exhibited around the country, Brann has put together a basic survival kit for the person who is confronting the "hopeless" structure...the abandoned orphan that may have been exposed to vandals and the elements for a number of years. It has special relevance for "urban homesteading" and the "\$1 house" programs in which the new owners have problem houses on their hands and contractual obligations to show specific results fast.

ALL THROUGH THE BOOK, the emphasis is on nuts-and-bolts basics. Brann starts out with building security, shows how to board up a building while work is going on, and gives a quick introduction to alarm systems that you may want to build into the renovated structure.

BRANN THEN GOES ON in an orderly fashion to review all of the basics: Roof repairs; foundation and basement repairs; coping with sagging floors;



replacing and repairing window sash; re-arranging and constructing new partitions. Where appropriate, Brann gives references to other books for more detailed techniques.

THE MOST SPACE (64 pages) is devoted to what must be Brann's first love: Plumbing. He shows how to install everything from the main service lines to all of the plumbing needed for bathroom and kitchen fixtures. Many of these plumbing tasks are more than most homeowners want to take on by themselves (like making hot-lead joints in cast-iron waste pipes) but it is nonetheless valuable to know—dealing with the plumber becomes less of a mysterious process.

MAIN SHORTCOMINGS OF THE BOOK are its almost total ignoring of electrical systems, and the lack of an index. But these are relatively small drawbacks in a well-illustrated book that contains such a wealth of other information. It's a valuable reference—even if your particular old building isn't abandoned. "How To Rehabilitate Abandoned Buildings" (Easi-Bild #685) is paperback and sells for \$3.50. Order from: Directions Simplified, P.O. Box 215, Briarcliff Manor, N.Y. 10510.

--R. A. Labine

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"Friends," he muttered, sitting amidst the rubble, under the glare of a single bulb dangling from the ornate plaster ceiling medallion.

"What good are they?"

He had plenty to party with, some to travel with, but none who would help with his newly purchased old house. They had come up with countless house-warming plans, to be sure. But at present, the house was too much of a disaster to even consider that. His musings were interrupted by the doorbell. He rose absentmindedly, stepped gingerly over the warped doorsill, peered through the vestibule and saw . . . nobody. "Darn kids!"

He opened the door, glanced up and down the block, and only then noticed the copy of the Old-House Journal at his feet. A note was attached to it.

"This will help you a lot more than we ever could." And it was signed: "Your friends."

Moral: Be a friend in need. Give The Old-House Journal. We'll send a certificate identifying you as the benefactor.