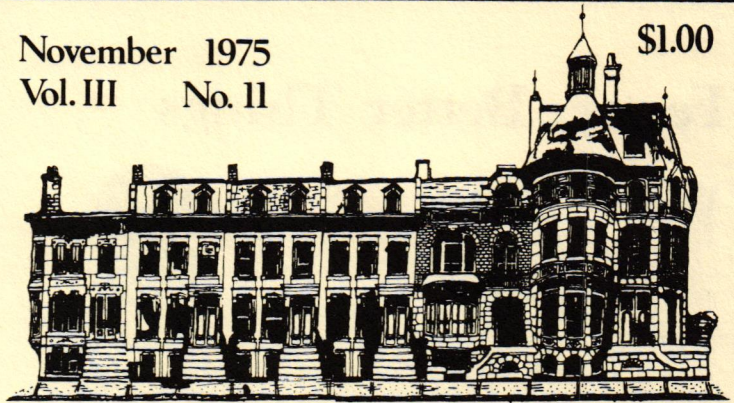


# THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

November 1975  
Vol. III No. 11

\$1.00



Renovation And Maintenance Ideas For The Antique House

Part II

## Wood Mouldings In Early American Detail

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### Coming Next Month

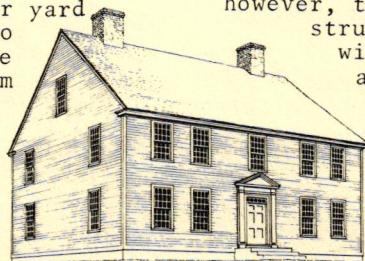
REPAIRING SLATE ROOFS

**T**HERE ARE MANY REASONS why a home-owner might want to add architectural detail to doorways, windows, walls, or mantels. Some or all of the architectural trim may have been destroyed over the years; a new addition may require the kind of decoration found in the older part of the house to unify the whole structure; or the house may have been built originally without these important details.

THERE ARE MANY OLD HOUSES that were constructed by a builder who was so rushed he didn't have time to put in all that he could have. Or perhaps the owner couldn't afford any more than the plainest construction. If the window of a house has nothing better looking than plain, flat boards covering the gap between the frame and the plaster wall, there is no reason why the present owner shouldn't add the kind of detailing that is appropriate to the period of the house.

WOOD MOULDINGS from the local lumber yard will add visual interest and is also the kind of project that can be done a little at a time. The added charm that results can also increase the value of the house.

THERE ARE SOME RULES to keep in mind before lifting hammer or saw. Exterior and interior trim should be related. Additionally, the



moulding used on the mantel should be the same as that used around doorways and windows. The trim on exterior windows should relate to the entrance way.

**A**LSO, the period of the house must be taken into consideration. A small survey of surrounding old houses built around the same time, and a review of pictures in the local historical society, library, or architectural books will provide a focus and some ideas. Keeping the house in period is not so difficult as it sounds; the home-owner who will be using stock mouldings in a fairly simple, classical manner will find that arrangements of crown mouldings, picture frame mouldings, etc, are appropriate to the popular Federal and Greek Revival periods.

THE VICTORIAN STYLES are another matter and usually require more than stock mouldings to reproduce. There are some interior features, however, that are relatively simple to construct with stock mouldings and they will be shown in further issues about about wall treatments.

THE FARMHOUSE can often benefit from added architectural detail. So often built as economically as possible, these old Federal or Greek Revival rural dwellings  
(Continued on page 9)

Perspective...

## Fewer, Better Things

WE HAVE MADE A NEW RESOLUTION at The Old-House Journal brownstone—spurred by the review of catalogs and brochures we made in putting together the Buyers' Guide.



RESOLVED: From now on, we are going to buy fewer, better things!

WE HAVE BEEN AMAZED at the number of companies (most small, but some big) who are making high quality products that are appropriate for old, traditional houses. We judge quality on two counts: (1) Top-quality materials; (2) Top-quality craftsmanship. Design is a matter of personal taste. But materials and workmanship are objective realities!

THE THINGS WE VALUE from the past almost invariably are well-crafted from fine materials—whether it's a house or a piece of furniture or a decorative object. If it didn't have these two characteristics, it wouldn't last long enough for anyone to be able to call it an "antique" a century later.

IN AN AGE OF INFLATION, alas, good materials and good workmanship don't come cheap. Many of the items turned out by craftsmen seem expensive when compared with injection-molded plastic. We have been conditioned by countless commercials to buy the cheap thing, and then to buy a new one when the first breaks/crumbles/disintegrates. When the goal is immediate gratification, low initial price becomes the controlling factor.

**B**UT I, FOR ONE, am getting tired of a life cluttered with disposable, breakable things. So not only have we resolved to buy only the finest quality things for our old house—but whenever possible to buy them from a craftsman we know personally. This means we'll be buying fewer things—and waiting longer between purchases. So be it.

FOR EXAMPLE, we recently needed some lamps for The Journal office. After poring through our catalog collection, we found some lovely brass student lamps. They are hand-made by one of the craftsmen we have written up in The Journal. They weren't cheap...but we didn't have to take out a second mortgage to buy them either. Not only are our new lamps a joy to look at, but there's an extra sense of satisfaction in owning a finely crafted piece that was made by someone you know.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS why a throw-away economy is bad in the long run for the world's resources. But most important of all, an economy built on cheap junk is bad for our souls!

*Clem Labine*

## THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

Published Monthly For People Who Love Old Houses

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Published by The Old-House Journal Co., 199 Berkeley Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217. Tel. (212) 636-4514. Subscriptions \$12/yr. in U.S. and Canada; \$20/yr. elsewhere. Printed at Royal Offset Co., 34 W. 15 St., NYC 10011. Contents of The Old-House Journal are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without specific permission in writing from The Editor.

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Notes From The Readers...

### Drawbacks Of Waterproof Gypsumboard

To The Editor:

I have found that waterproof gypsum board (Aug. '75, p.12) is not as satisfactory as one would hope for such applications as partitions behind tiled showers. Despite the water-repellent treatment on the paper covering, the board will absorb moisture, which leads to fungus growth within the board. This in turn creates a musty or mildew odor in the room.

In my experience, the best product to use behind glued-on tile is waterproof plywood. It can be set flush with the adjoining gypsum board partitions, then tiled over in the conventional manner.

Alvin Ubell, Accurate Building Inspectors—Brooklyn, N.Y.

### Silicone Coating For Brass

To The Editor:

Lacquering brass is a pain in the neck—and it never lasts. About nine years ago, I cleaned up an old 12-arm brass ceiling fixture and coated it by hand with a light coat of Slipit. Slipit is a silicone-containing lubricant that is sold in hardware stores for easing sticky windows, drawers and the like.

In nine years the brass has darkened only slightly...the fixture won't need re-polishing for many years. The Slipit coating isn't sticky; you can just blow the dust off. I will never lacquer brass again!

T. Steinway  
New York, N.Y.

# A SCOTTISH MANOR IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



By Carolyn Flaherty

**H**UNDREDS OF PEOPLE in the last few years have knocked on the door of the "funny old house" in Redlands, California. Some have been invited to tour, and some just want to see the progress being made since Russell and Jean Wilmot bought this unique "round-top" house in 1970.

AT THAT TIME the house was run-down and vacant with the usual symptoms of abandonment. The Wilmots knew they were acquiring a lot of problems but also a soon-to-be-lovely home. They didn't realize at the time that they had also acquired a bit of California history.

ORIGINALLY KNOWN as "The Donald Home," builder Davis Donald designed the house for his own use to resemble the Scottish Manor he had previously built in his native Scotland. Less grand than the homes he built for others, it was a one-storey house with a dome and was painted gold with white trim as it is again today.

**I**T WAS COMPLETED IN 1892 and constructed of redwood and hardwoods as many homes were in California at that time. In 1908 Davis removed the dome because the support beams that filled the attic took up most of the space he needed for a bedroom for his grandsons. One of his grandsons, Jim, and his wife Clara, occupied the house until 1946, ending the half century in which the Donalds had kept the house a Redlands showplace. Eventually it was abandoned and the formal garden overrun with vines and tumbleweed.

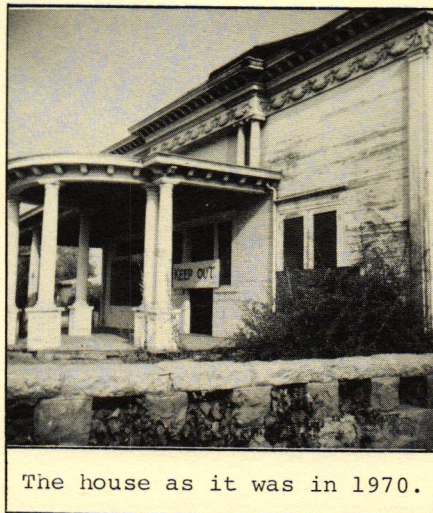
ONE DAY, shortly before their marriage, Jean and Russ passed the house and noticed that someone had cut down the bushes that had previously hid it from view and added a "for sale" sign.

IMPULSIVELY, Jean said, "Oh, I'd love to live there!" Of course, she didn't really mean it. She had never thought about old houses before and Victorian was something "icky" her mother and her mother's friends used to like.

**B**UT THE NEXT DAY Russ called at her office and asked her to come see the house on her lunch hour. He had spoken to the real estate agent and found that they were having great trouble keeping transients out of the house. Russ and Jean had to climb through a window. All the original brass hardware had been removed, all the windows were broken, and trash and hypodermic needles were strewn on the floor. It had become a "hippie hotel."

**T**O ADD TO the general disaster, a huge vine, "like something out of Disneyland," had grown into the house. It had separated the exterior siding from the house as well as destroying some of the inside trim. Jean announced that she had better things to do on her lunch hour.

BUT THEN SHE WALKED INTO the three front rooms that still had the original, natural woodwork, and thought, "That's where I would like to put my Christmas tree." The Wilmots moved in two months after their marriage. With six children from former marriages, they needed the space the large house provided.



The house as it was in 1970.

**F**ORTUNATELY, Russ was able to do all the wiring, plumbing, and small building himself. But many Redlanders thought the Wilmots were crazy to take on such a job. And since the house is located on a fairly busy corner, the people in the town were able to watch the progress. They soon began to drop by with words of encouragement. It is now a pleasant and unusual home,