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**ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**  
**OF**  
**HISTORIC PROPERTIES**  
**IN**  
**EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN**

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Eau Claire has a rich heritage and past. An important bridge to this heritage still remains in the buildings that provide a sense of place unique to no other community. Whether these buildings are residential, commercial, industrial or religious in nature, all reflect the City's evolution from a lumber center to a regional manufacturing and service center. Looking at these buildings also gives us a glimpse of the diverse nature of the people that took part in the growth of the community.

This brochure has been prepared for the public by the Eau Claire Landmarks Commission to inform and educate the public of the many architectural styles of buildings within the City. Hopefully, it will provide you with a greater appreciation of these buildings and of those who were involved in their construction.

The brochure identifies the most common types of architectural styles which were built in the City from the 1850s through the early 1900s. In addition, some of the most characteristic features of these styles are illustrated. The brochure also identifies on a city map, the location of several buildings which are good examples of each architectural style featured.

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## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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Over the past one hundred fifty years, the peaceful setting at the confluence of the Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers has changed from an undisturbed wilderness to a bustling community of nearly sixty thousand people.

It began in the early 1800s, more than twenty years before Wisconsin attained statehood, when the first rafts of logs were being sent down the Chippewa River from the vast forests to the north. At a site approximately two-thirds of the way between the source of the Chippewa River and its confluence with the Mississippi River, the Chippewa River was joined by the last substantial river flowing from the east, the Eau Claire River. This river junction, claimed by both the Chippewa and Sioux tribes and used as a point of transfer during the fur trade era, possessed a number of natural assets, which by the mid 1850s generated the nucleus of a community.

But by 1850, a new breed of settlers arrived, lured from the East by the promise of great fortunes to be made from the seemingly endless forests. This river junction, with its transportation routes, natural log storage areas and water power for sawmills, provided an ideal place for these Yankee entrepreneurs to establish a new lumbering center.

Several sawmills were in full swing by 1855. Norwegian, Irish, French-Canadian and German immigrants poured in to work the mills and farm the lands. This tough little lumbering community was on its way.

By 1857, one tiny village had developed on the west bank of the Chippewa River, while two others grew up on the north and south sides of the Eau Claire River. They were separated from each other by the waterways which were so vital to their survival. By 1860, their combined population had grown from a handful of people to over 2,000.

The settlement boomed, in spite of setbacks caused by frequent fires and floods and the devastating economic Panic of 1857. Stagecoaches and steamboats connected them with the outside world. Reliable bridges were built across the Eau Claire River in 1859 and the Chippewa River in 1869, and the first locomotive arrived in 1870. In 1872, the three original villages were incorporated as the City of Eau Claire.

Continued migration to the West created a growing demand for lumber, and the Eau Claire mills were ready to meet it. Millions upon millions of board feet of lumber were processed here and shipped out by rail over the next twenty years. In 1880 and 1885, the mills of Eau Claire produced more than one-half of all the lumber manufactured in the Chippewa Valley.

By 1885, the population had swelled to 21,000. Eau Claire was Wisconsin's third largest city, twice the size of Madison. In 1889, it became the fourth city in the United States to have electric streetcars. It seemed that the good times would never end.

By the beginning of the 1890s, however, the dreams began to fade. Reductions in lumber output, followed by mill consolidations and then closings, accompanied the continuing depletion of the timber resources. Between 1885 and 1890, Eau Claire lost twenty percent of its population.

Despite the reversal, Eau Claire was able to make the transition from lumbering to diversified manufacturing. By the early 1890s, locally produced items included mill machinery, small appliances, paper, sulfite, boots and shoes, office fixtures, furniture, sleighs, furs, boxes, refrigerators, candy, hams, linens, beer, mattresses, and canned goods.

In the 1920s, the automobile gained popularity and in turn has influenced development patterns in communities throughout the nation. Since that time, the population of Eau Claire has continued to grow from 30,745 in 1940, to nearly double that amount of 56,856 in 1990.

The early settlers of Eau Claire are gone now, and so are many of the dwellings in which they lived. But they left something enduring, a rich history and wonderful architectural diversity. Their buildings, streets and neighborhoods are symbols of the vibrant enthusiasm with which our forebears viewed the future.

# ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW

The first European-built houses in the Eau Claire area were rough, hand-hewn log cabins, built by French-Canadian fur traders who trapped the abundant wildlife of the great pine forest blanketing the Chippewa Valley. Their modest log cabins were fashioned from these magnificent white pines. They were obviously concerned not with architectural styles but with the simple and expedient means of providing shelter using the most abundant, workable and easily obtainable material of the area.

By 1850, the first wave of Eastern settlers arrived to the Eau Claire area. Their interest in the magnificent forest was not to trap but to log. Several sawmills were in full production by 1855, and by 1860 the population of the area had grown from a mere handful of people to over 2,000. Family homes, rooming houses, stores, hotels and saloons sprang up seemingly overnight. All were built by local builders from the narrow boards produced at the local mills, which now proved to be the most abundant, workable and easily obtainable building material of the area, making the log cabin a thing of the past.

Residential architecture during this period from 1860-1880 was simple, marked by two common house forms rather than any architectural style. One form is known as the "I-House," a simple rectangular building one room wide by two rooms deep, two to three stories tall, with a gable roof. The other form is the "Upright and Wing," whereby the two story gabled rectangle has an attached one or 1/2 story wing. This wing was often an addition, reflecting the growth of the families of the early mill workers. The houses of the wealthier families were larger but still simple and similar in form.

Despite the simplicity of construction during these early times, the desire to impress and express through building was active and most evident in the commercial architecture of the period, appropriately called "Boomtown Commercial." Local business owners, operating out of modest one story gabled buildings, would have the builders erect a taller and more formal "stage-set" 2 story front facing the business street to improve the prestige of the fledgling business within.

In the late 1860s the lumber industry stabilized and in 1872 Eau Claire incorporated. In 1870 the first locomotive arrived, allowing for a quicker and easier exchange of people, information, and styles from the East. It was at this time that residences with specific architectural styles, borrowed from styles popular in the larger cities and out East, were built. Especially influential were architectural "pattern books" which allowed carpenters and builders to create more artistic and imaginative homes up-to-date with the latest Eastern styles.

The Victorian Styles – Gothic, Greek Revival, Romanesque Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Victorian Cottage and Queen Anne – appeared in Eau Claire from the 1870s to the end of the century. These styles never aimed at creating historical replicas of the periods they were "reviving." Rather, architectural features from these various historical periods were chosen and combined in innovative ways to create picturesque styles evocative of the desired period, and most importantly, expressing the romantic freedom characteristic of the times: of the adventure of settlement and the constant innovations and improvements of the era.

Lumber barons and successful merchants displayed their prosperity by building massive houses and incorporating wonderful and romantic decorative extravagances. Wings and bays grew out boldly. Parapets, turrets and pinnacles topped all. New technology in saws and lathes made it possible for carpenters to create the elaborate shapes, complicated roof lines and exquisitely crafted detail of the Victorian architecture. Even the most modest housing, while still being a basic I-House or Upright and Wing, could incorporate whimsical decorative touches such as balustraded porches or bracketed eaves. The Queen Anne style especially dominated the city's domestic architecture from the 1880s to the end of the century, with the finest examples being found in the Randall Park and Third Ward districts of town.

Between 1890 and 1910, Eau Claire saw lumber replaced by manufacturing as the mainstay of the local economy, and after 1910, accepted another stream of steady population growth. The city

began its move outward from the historic center at the river junction.

For the wealthy industrialist and the worker alike, houses became smaller and styles simpler, in keeping with a trend which would continue for many years. The romantic Victorian styles were swept away in favor of the more formal and more historically correct Classical Revival styles. These include the Colonial, Georgian, Romanesque, Beaux Arts, Classical (Italian Renaissance) Revival. While important residential styles, these Classical Revival styles, with their simple and symmetrical massings, classical cornices, columns and pediments, were especially influential in public architecture.

Slightly later, from 1910-1930, the "Eclectic Revival" architecture appeared – Collegiate Gothic, Commercial Gothic, and Tudor Revival. Though still formal, massive, and more historically true, these styles sported more romantic irregular massings, steep roofs with turrets, and a concentration of Gothic imagery. Building materials expanded to include rough cut stone and glazed terra cotta tiles.

Before the turn of the century through the 1920s some distinctly American styles emerged: Richardsonian Romanesque, the Prairie School (a predominately Midwestern style) and later, from 1910-1940, the Bungalow style. These styles are characterized by simpler architectural detail and a more horizontal look. Brick or stucco become more common building materials, along with horizontal wood siding, which is now stained dark and cut wider. Bungalows became an especially popular new home choice for middle income Eau Claire families – as can be seen in the Emery Street Bungalow district – and were considered quite modern in their day, conforming to the early twentieth century preference for compact open floor plans, simplicity, and style. The Emery Street Bungalow district is 3 blocks long.

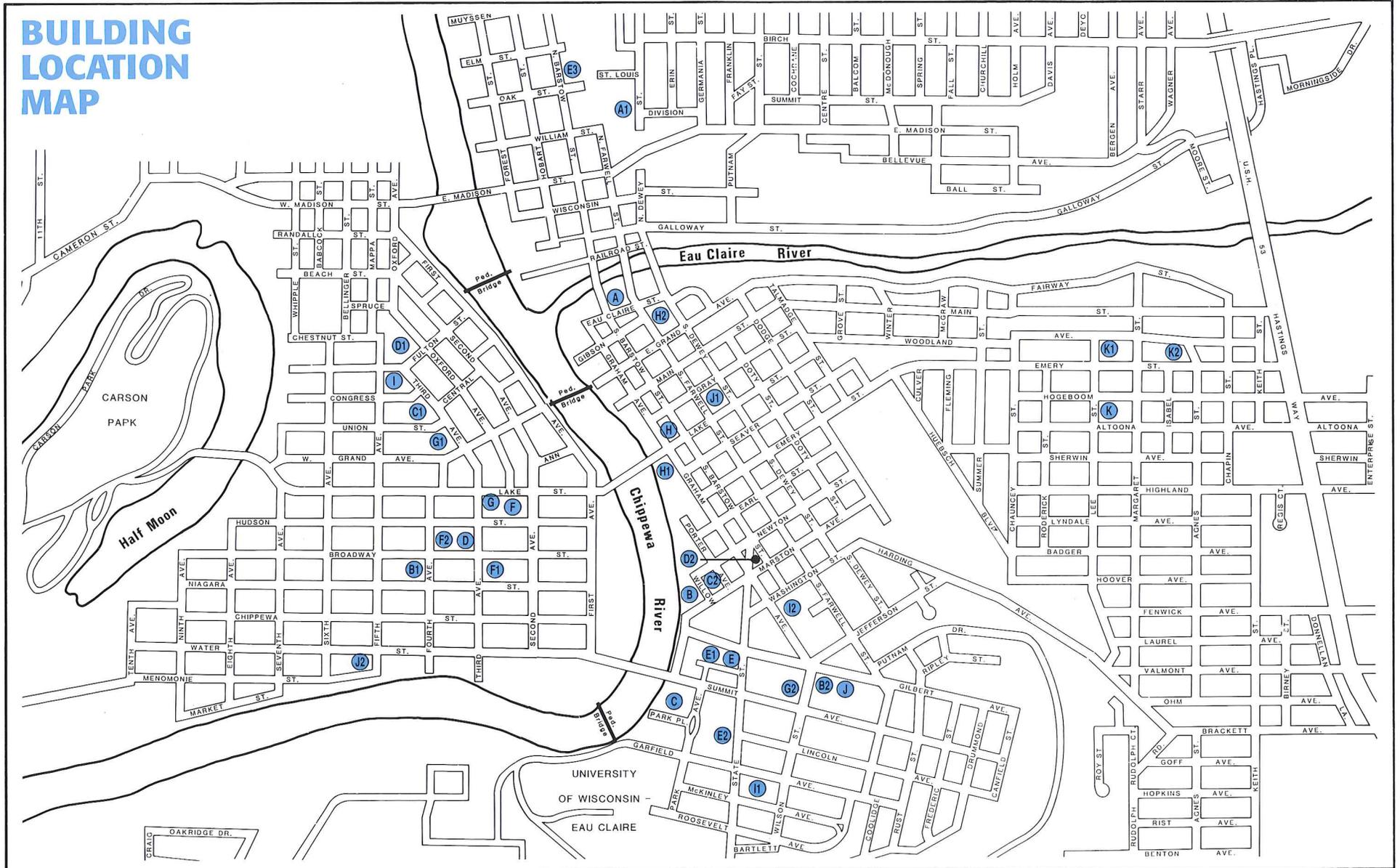
The period between the World Wars saw the emergence of the International Style, Art Deco, and Art Moderne styles, representing a conscious break with the various revival movements of the time and aiming for clean, simple lines and a "Machine Age" esthetic.

- A. RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE,**  
Cameron-Drummond-Stagsvold Building,  
17-21 S. Barstow St.  
**A1.** Sacred Heart Church, 418 N. Dewey St.
- B. GEORGIAN REVIVAL,**  
Orlando Brice House, 120 Marston Ave.  
**B1.** First Baptist Church, 416 Niagara St.  
**B2.** 1307 Wilson St.
- C. TUDOR REVIVAL,**  
Earl Hale House, 124 Park Place  
**C1.** 902 Third Ave.  
**C2.** 132 Marston Ave.

- D. GOTHIC REVIVAL,**  
First Congregational Church, 310 Broadway St.  
**D1.** St. Patrick's Church, 322 Fulton St.  
**D2.** 1011 State St.
- E. QUEEN ANNE,**  
Addison Cutter House, 1302 State Street  
**E1.** 210 Oakwood Pl.  
**E2.** 1500 State St.  
**E3.** 605 N. Barstow St.

- F. PRAIRIE SCHOOL,**  
J.D.R. Steven House, 606 2nd Ave.  
**F1.** 403 Third Ave.  
**F2.** Congregational Church Community  
House, 310 Broadway St.
- G. COLONIAL REVIVAL,**  
Charles Ingram House, 617 Third Ave.  
**G1.** 822 Third Ave.  
**G2.** 1328 Wilson St.
- H. BEAUX ARTS,**  
Federal Building, 500 S. Barstow St.  
**H1.** 616 Graham Ave.  
**H2.** 203-217 S. Farwell St.

- I. AMERICAN FOUR SQUARE,**  
1011 Fifth Ave.  
**I1.** 323 Garfield Ave.  
**I2.** 1219 Graham Ave.
- J. UPRIGHT AND WING,**  
439 Gilbert  
**J1.** 517 S. Farwell St.  
**J2.** 526 Menomonie St.
- K. BUNGALOW,**  
1510 Altoona Ave.  
**K1.** 1516 Emery St.  
**K2.** 1720 Emery St.



# RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE

## Cameron-Drummond-Slagsvold Building (1893-1894)

Massive effect created with rusticated (roughly hewn) stonework base and horizontal rusticated stone bands. Deep set windows reveal thickness of walls. Medieval and vertical effects created by rounded brick turret motifs and round corner tower with battered base and peaked roof. Rounded masonry arched openings.

Other Richardsonian Romanesque Building: Sacred Heart Church  
(418 N. Dewey St.)

RUSTICATED STONE FINIAL

ROUNDED BRICK  
TURRET MOTIF PIERS

RUSTICATED BELT COURSES

CORNER TOWER

ROUND ARCH OPENING

BATTERED BASE



17-21 S. Barstow Street

# GEORGIAN REVIVAL

## Orlando Brice House (1918)

Elliptical fanlight with intricate tracery over doorway set in an elaborate classical frame. Central semi-circular projecting entry portico, with fluted doric columns and pilasters. Chimneys placed to enhance symmetrical facade. Historically correct classical detailing. Brick was a preferred Georgian building material.

Other Georgian Revival Buildings: First Baptist Church (416 Niagara St.),  
1307 Wilson St.



120 Marston Avenue

# TUDOR REVIVAL

Earl Hale House (1928)

Irregular, picturesque massing with many intersecting steeply pitched roofs. Gables with elaborate bargeboards and finials. Decorative "half-timbering" (exposed timber framing) with stucco or brick infill. Shallow, pointed arched entryway.

Other Tudor Revival Buildings: 902 Third Ave., 132 Marston Ave.



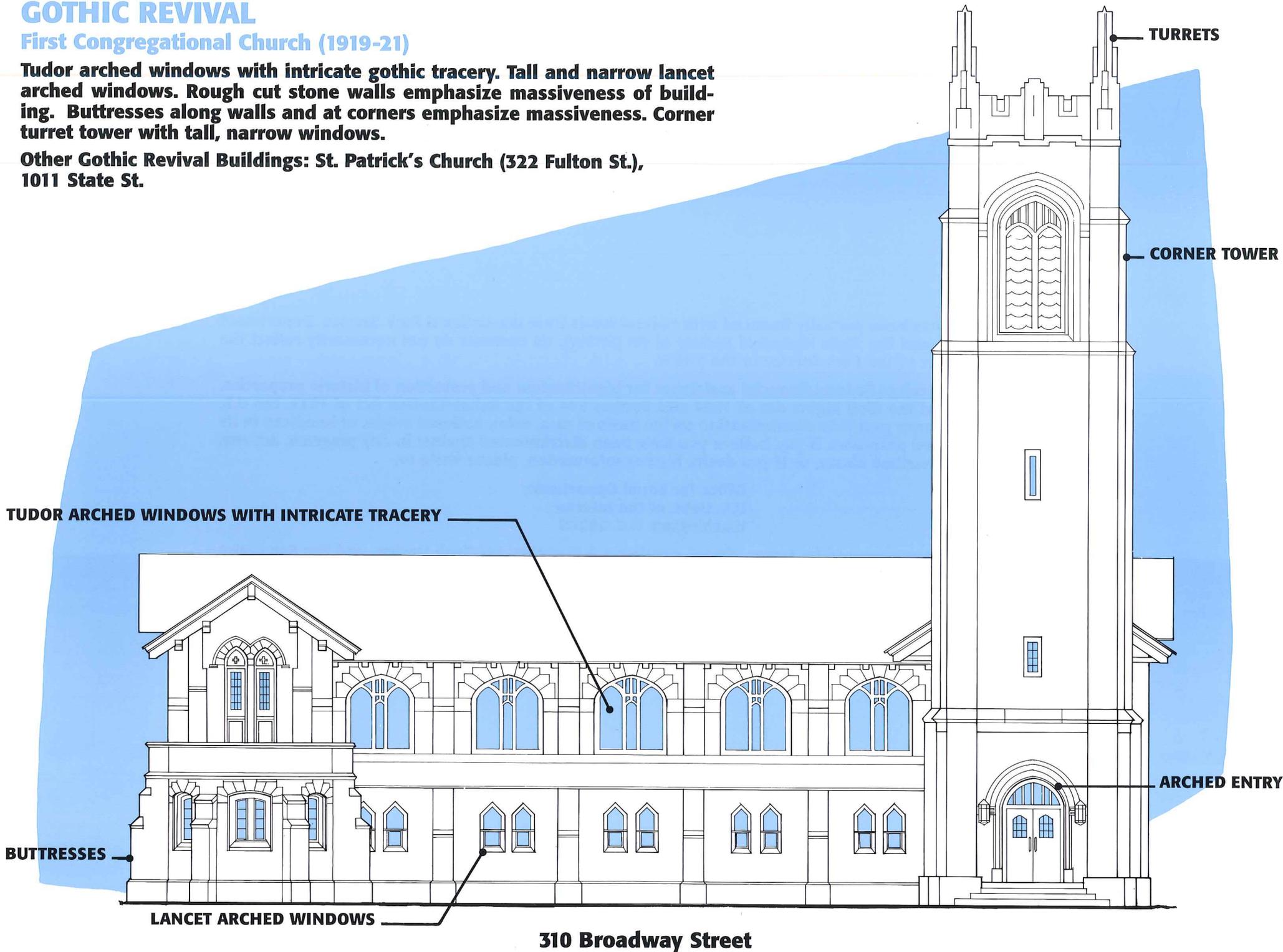
124 Park Place

# GOTHIC REVIVAL

## First Congregational Church (1919-21)

Tudor arched windows with intricate gothic tracery. Tall and narrow lancet arched windows. Rough cut stone walls emphasize massiveness of building. Buttresses along walls and at corners emphasize massiveness. Corner turret tower with tall, narrow windows.

Other Gothic Revival Buildings: St. Patrick's Church (322 Fulton St.), 1011 State St.



310 Broadway Street

# QUEEN ANNE

## Addison Cutter House (1885-89)

Asymmetrical house shape. Multiple, intersecting steeply pitched roofs, often with cantilevered gables create prominent right triangles. Porches of many sizes and shapes, with intricate and playful turned wood trim. Immense variety and free mix of decorative and classical wood detailing, all small in detail and subordinate to the building. Clapboard siding with wood shingled upper floors, gables, and side bay.

Other Queen Anne Buildings: 210 Oakwood Pl., 1500 State St., 605 N. Barstow St.



1302 State Street

## PRAIRIE SCHOOL

J.D.R. Steven House (1909, by Purcell & Feick of Minneapolis)

Brick and stucco siding, with dark wood trim in wide horizontal bands. Prominent belt course between stories to increase horizontal effect. Low pitched hip roof with deep overhanging eaves sweeping out to encompass the landscape. Casement windows grouped in horizontal bands.

Other Prairie School Buildings: 403 Third Ave., Congregational Church  
Community House (310 Broadway St.)



606 Second Avenue

# COLONIAL REVIVAL

Charles Ingram House (1899)

Three part, center arched Palladian window.  
Historically correct classical detailing, including Roman inspired grillwork and Corinthian columns, cornice with elaborate mouldings and dentils.  
Gently bowed side bays enhance symmetry. Symmetrical main facades with large projecting central entry porches.

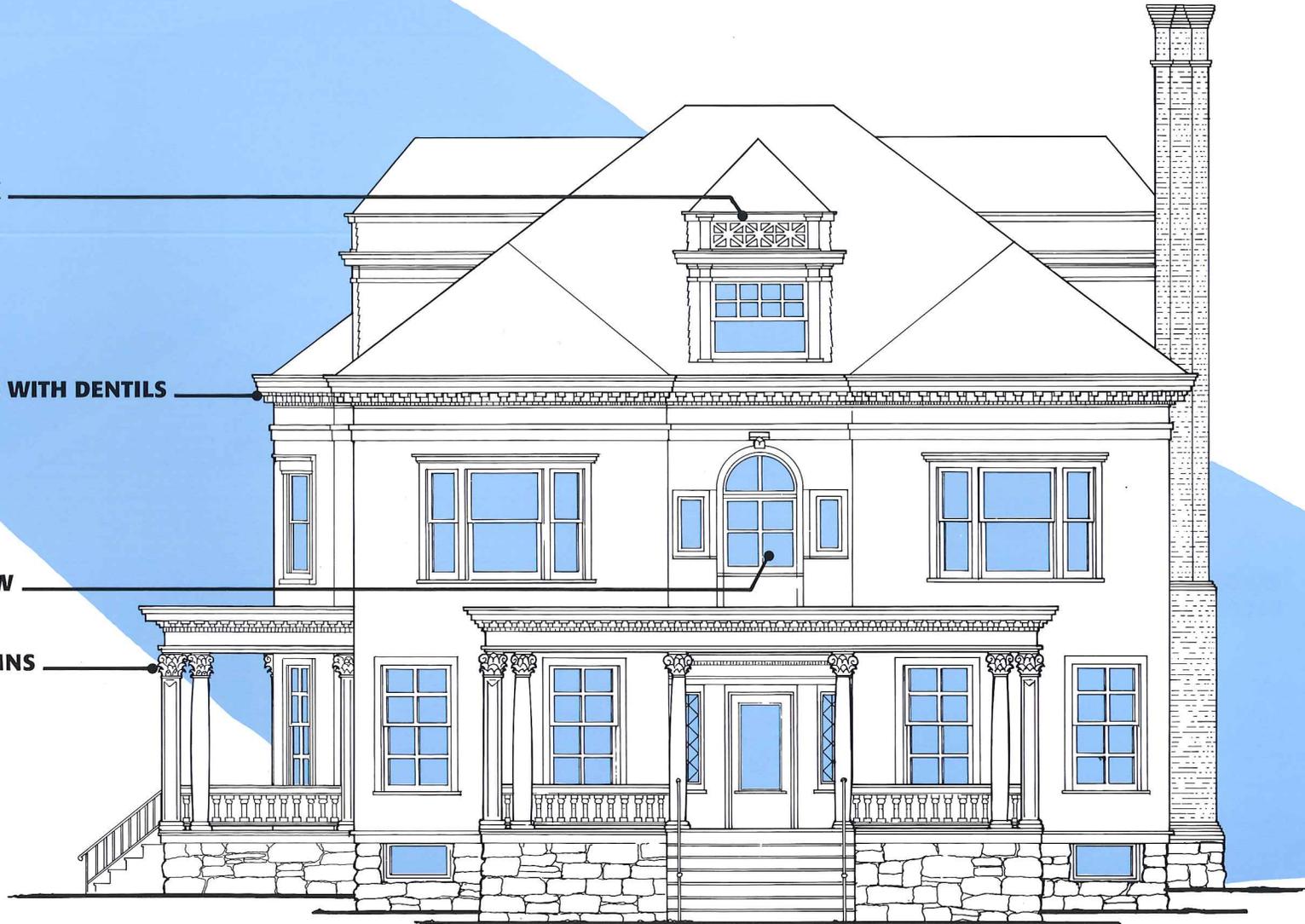
Other Colonial Revival Buildings: 822 Third Ave., 1328 Wilson St.

ROMAN GRILLWORK

CLASSICAL CORNICE WITH DENTILS

PALLADIAN WINDOW

CORINTHIAN COLUMNS



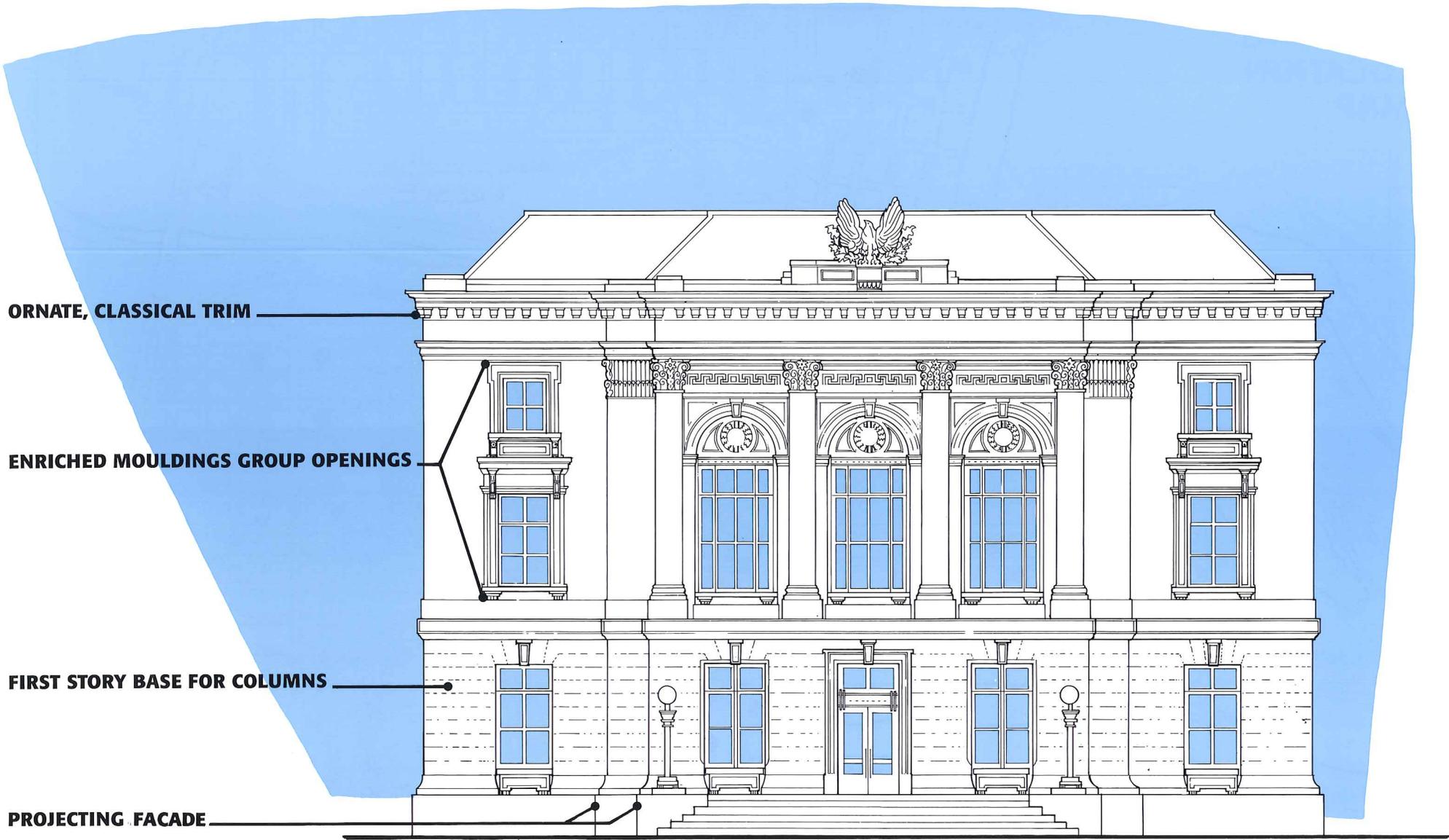
617 Third Avenue

# BEAUX ARTS

## Federal Building (1909)

Italian Renaissance-inspired formal, classical, and ornate building with perfect symmetry. Projecting facade with multi-storey classical columns over a first storey base. Enriched moldings around windows and doors, often grouping them for a stronger vertical effect.

Other Beaux Arts Buildings: 616 Graham Ave., 203-217 S. Farwell St.



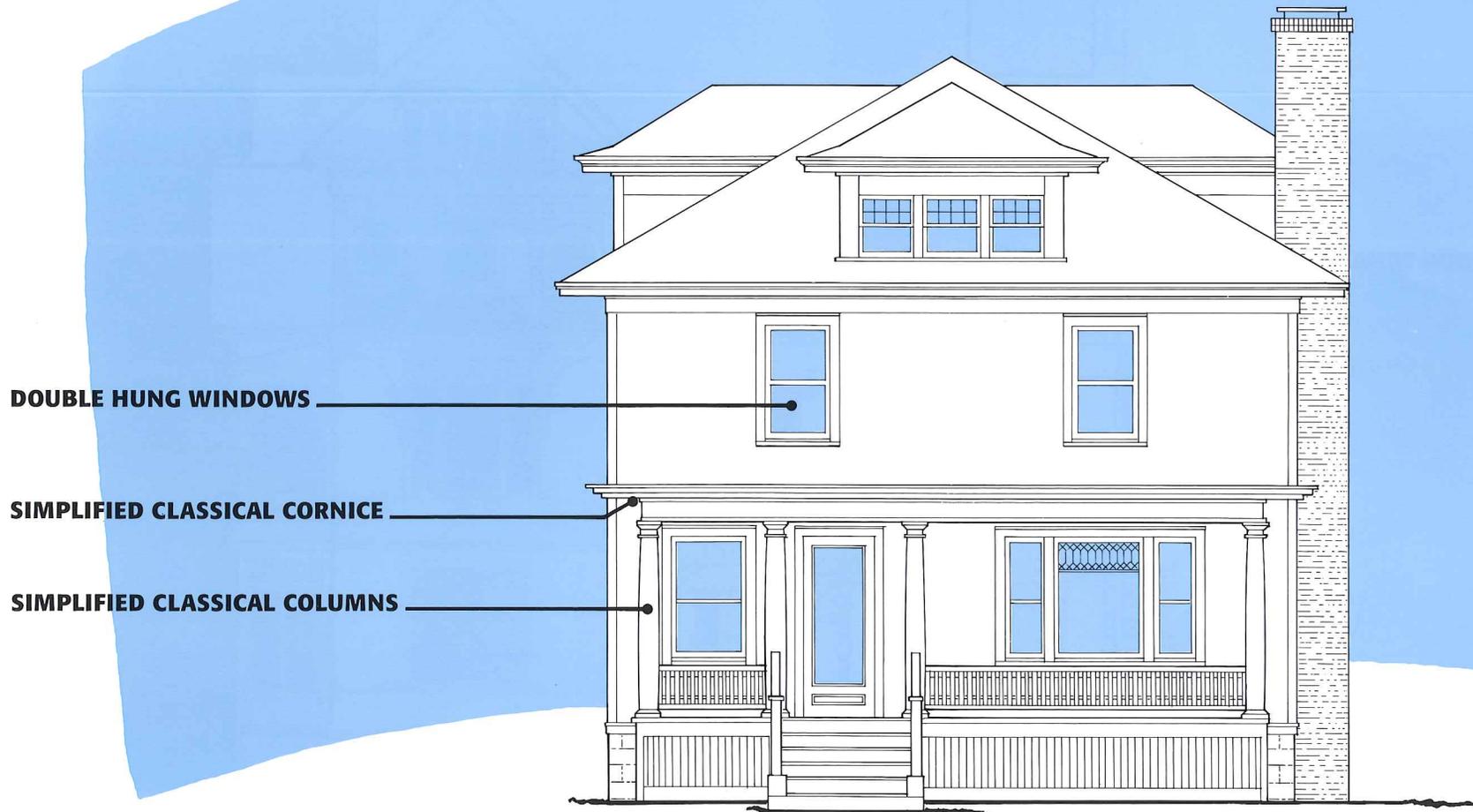
500 S. Barstow Street

# AMERICAN FOUR SQUARE

(Vernacular Residential 1921)

Two story house with "4 over 4" plan, having four main rooms on each of the two floors. Square main facade with window and door patterns hinting of 4 over 4 plan. Hipped roof with overhanging eaves, square or rectangular plan. Simplified classical detailing. Double-hung windows. Full one story front entry porch along first floor.

Other American Four Square Buildings: 323 Garfield Ave., 1219 Graham Ave.



1011 Fifth Avenue

# UPRIGHT AND WING

(Vernacular Residential c. 1880)

Two story front gabled main block (one room wide), with side gabled house wing, forms an "ell" ("L") floor plan. Entrance often at porch in "ell" formed by the main house block and its wing. Later additions are common, as this vernacular house type evolved from the need to enlarge a house over time.

Other Upright and Wing Buildings: 517 S. Farwell St., 526 Menomonie St.



439 Gilbert

# BUNGALOW

(1928)

Gently pitched gable roof over a small front porch. Gable with simple bargeboards and long exposed rafter ends. Battered (flared toward the base) porch column. Simple, large roof brackets.

Other Bungalow Buildings: 1516 Emery St., 1720 Emery St.

ROOF BRACKET

SIMPLE BARGEBOARD

EXPOSED,  
DECORATIVE RAFTER ENDS



1510 Altoona Avenue

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