



DOWNERS GROVE ARCHITECTURE

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For the purposes of this survey assignment, buildings within the four survey areas were classified according to a defined architectural style and their overall vernacular building form. A defined architectural style is often termed as “high-style” — a style that exhibits a certain number of defined characteristics related to its overall exterior design, material use, ornamentation, façade articulation and other architectural features. High-style architecture may also suggest buildings designed by a known architect or designer. Common architectural styles found within Downers Grove include Queen Anne, Prairie, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Spanish Revival, Minimal Traditional and Mid-Century Modern. Most properties within the survey areas have a defined architectural style.

As opposed to high-style architecture, a “vernacular” building type or form is typically defined by the building’s overall massing and shape, interior space configuration and function, and materials used in its construction rather its exterior stylistic characteristics. For example, one of the common building forms in Downers Grove is the bungalow, which is usually low-slung or horizontal in appearance and, one or one-and-one-half floors in height with dormer windows in its front or side elevations. Although the bungalow form can be found throughout the Village, each bungalow may also exhibit a distinct architectural style, including Craftsman and Prairie in particular. Other common building forms include the Foursquare and the Ranch.

The principal publications and architectural stylebooks used to determine building forms and architectural styles in Downers Grove include: *A Field Guide to American Homes* by Virginia and Lee Macalester; *American House Styles: A Concise Guide* by John Milnes Baker; *American Vernacular Design: 1870-1940* by Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings; and, *The Buildings of Main Street* by Richard Longstreth. The survey

team also consulted the *Ranch House in Georgia: Guidelines for Evaluation*, prepared by the Georgia Department of Transportation in 2010 as a resource for evaluating Ranch homes in Downers Grove.

VERNACULAR BUILDING FORMS

Gable-Front and Gabled-Ell

A Gable-Front Cottage or House was one of the more common vernacular building forms throughout the mid to late-1800s and features a dominant “open gable” elevation facing the street. The Gable-Front is also characterized as having a simple form and clean lines that do not distinguish between an upper or lower façade for both cottages (typically one story) and houses (typically two stories). The house form was often used for working and middle-class homes and may have Greek Revival, Italianate and Queen Anne detailing and ornamentation. The Gable-Ell



A Gable-Front house at 4601 Main Street, 1890s.

cottage or house was also a common building type from the 1870s through the 1920s and featured a dominant front gable with one or two short wing extensions on the rear elevation. Usually, an entrance porch would be on one side of the house along the street. Like the Gable-Front, the Gable-Ell may also have Queen Anne and other

architectural stylistic characteristics. The Gable-Front and Gable-Ell building forms can mostly found in the E.H. Prince's Subdivision.



A Queen Anne Gable-Ell at 4816 Linscott Avenue, 1890s

Foursquare

The Foursquare was a popular vernacular building form in nearly every part of the country from the 1890s through to the 1920s. Sometimes called the "Classical Box" or "Prairie Box," common characteristics of the Foursquare include its square or rectangular floor plan; its medium pitched pyramid hip roof; one or more centrally placed dormers; full front porches, some open, some enclosed; and, wood, stucco, and brick walls.



An American Foursquare with some Prairie Style characteristics such as stucco cladding, 4809 Oakwood Avenue, 1920s

Almost all Foursquares were two and-a-half stories in height. In Downers Grove, a majority of the Foursquares were designed with a particular style, most often in Prairie, Craftsman or Colonial Revival features. Prairie Foursquares are often noted for their wide eaves; Colonial Revival elements may include Palladian windows, pilasters as corner trim work, and porch columns topped with capitals. The Foursquare building form can be found in the E.H. Prince's Subdivision and along the Maple Avenue Corridor.

Bungalow

As noted previously, the Bungalow, along with the Foursquare, was one of the dominant building forms in Downers Grove and found both in the E.H. Prince's Subdivision and the Maple Avenue Corridor. The name "bungalow" is of a British importation, derived from the Hindi word "bangle," meaning a low house with a porch. In the United States, bungalows have come to be known as one general residential building type even though they may be designed in different architectural styles. American bungalows are typically one-and-one-half stories in height, have gently pitched gable or hip roof, and partial or full front porches. Bungalows designed in the Craftsman style may have wood clapboard siding and exposed roof rafters; those in the Prairie style may have wide eaves and stucco cladding. The Chicago Bungalow is entirely constructed in brick.



A Craftsman Bungalow at 4604 Linscott Avenue, 1920s.

Ranch

The modern Ranch house has its predecessors in the vernacular frontier architecture of California and the Southwest where the traditional one-story Spanish settlement dwellings took root. Today, the Ranch home is often associated with the new suburban subdivisions that were developed all around the country after World War II. In Downers Grove, Ranch homes can mostly be found in the Shady Lane Estates, although a number of Ranch homes can also be found in the Denburn Woods Subdivision. A vast majority of the Ranch homes in Downers Grove exhibit Mid-Century Modern design characteristics, although some may have features of other architectural styles.



A Mid-Century Modern Ranch house at 4142 Florence Avenue, 1950s.

Split Level

The Split Level is a variant of the Ranch house in which a two-story wing is intercepted at mid-height by the main one-story wing, thus providing three levels of floor space in the house. Examples of Split-Level homes can be found in all four survey areas.

One-Part Commercial

The One-Part Commercial building is one of the two most common vernacular commercial building types found in Downers Grove, mainly in the downtown commercial district along Warren Avenue and Main Street. One-part commercial buildings are typically one story with a



A Split-Level home at 617 Maple Avenue, 1957

narrow street frontage dedicated to a storefront of glass windows, transoms and a recessed entryway. A façade wall area between the storefront level and the roof or cornice line was sometimes used for signage and advertising and may vary in height to promote the appearance of a two story rather than a one story building. Most One-Part Commercial buildings in downtown Downers Grove have simple, unornamented brick or stone facades with one or multiple storefront entries. Some facades have been altered with the use of an exterior insulation finishing system over the original building materials. After World War II, with the advent of Modern architectural styles, one-part buildings became even more simplified in ornamentation with facades of plain or textured brick or stone and “open fronted” storefronts of large sheets of plate glass providing clear views of



A One-Part Commercial building with Mid-Century Modern styling at 4956 Main Street, 1950s.

the store's interior. It has been suggested by some architectural historians that One-Part Commercial buildings were often constructed as an interim development until commercial district land values appreciated enough to support a larger, more profitable building.

Two-Part Commercial

Two-Part Commercial buildings are considered one of the most common vernacular building types found in traditional commercial districts. These buildings are typically two to four stories in height and have two distinct divisions — the lower commercial storefront zone and an upper zone containing private uses such as office space, hotels or apartments. The visual distinction and relationship between the lower and upper zones vary from building to building with some having clear changes in architectural features and styles while others have no differences and are harmonious in style and materials. Distinct divisions between the commercial and upper zones were sometimes accomplished by stone, metal or terra cotta banding or storefront cornices in wood and other materials. Two-Part commercial



A Two-Part Commercial building at 5219 Main Street, 1890s.

buildings in downtown Downers Grove have a mixed of architectural styles from Queen Anne and Tudor Revival to Mid-Century Modern.

Strip Commercial

The Strip Commercial building form is similar to the One-Part Commercial in that they are one-story in height with commercial storefronts but are fronted with parking spaces or lots rather than on the building's rear or side. Strip Commercial buildings began to appear during the 1950s as more people traveled with automobiles to do their shopping and dining. Strip commercial buildings often housed gas stations, fast-food places, convenience stores, offices, and retail and service establishments. Some are designed in variants of the Mid-Century Modern and late Modern Eclectic styles. The Strip Commercial building form can be found along Main Street in Survey Area 3.



A Strip Commercial building with Mid-Century Modern styling at 4934 Main Street

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Greek Revival (1830s to 1870s)

Nationally, Greek Revival was the dominant domestic architectural style during the middle of the 19th Century, although the style began principally with public buildings found in Philadelphia and other nearby cities along the eastern seaboard. The style migrated to other areas of the country, including Kentucky, Tennessee and the states that comprised the “Old Northwest” — Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Wisconsin and Illinois, as settlement and population expansion

continued from the east. Greek Revival was also one of the earliest architectural styles to be used for residential buildings in the Chicago area as the increasing prevalence of pattern books and carpenter guides popularized the style in vernacular building forms during the early to middle 1800s.

Typical attributes and characteristic of the style include a rectangular and gable-fronted building form, one or two stories in height, a hipped roof with cornice lines emphasizing a band of trim, and double-hung, multi-paned windows. Greek Revivals were usually constructed with clapboard siding and sometimes with decorative pediments and crown moldings over doors and windows. Its most particular architectural feature are the gable cornice returns that mimic a triangular pediment in Classical Greek architecture. In Downers Grove, one residential property, 835 Maple Avenue, was documented as Greek Revival.



Greek Revival-styled farmhouse at 844 Maple Avenue, 1890s

Gothic Revival (1840s to 1870s)

During the early to mid 1800s, the preference for the “picturesque” in domestic architecture, as characterized by valuing the pictorial aspects of architecture in combination with the rural landscape, gave rise to the Gothic Revival style, a style that was first practiced in England during the late 1700s. Alexander Jackson Downing was the



A Gothic Revival house at 726 Maple Avenue, 1890s

most prominent American architect and advocate for the Gothic Revival style, and his publications, *Rural Residences*, *Cottage Residences* and *The Architecture of Country Houses*, were highly influential in promoting the style through the various house plans and patterns presented in each book. Gothic Revival is considered mainly a rural style and more compatible with rural landscapes since its emphasis on multiple gables and wide porches did not lend itself to narrow lots in large towns and urban environments.

Typical features of a Gothic Revival home include its front gabled or asymmetrical building form, gables with decorative cross-bracing and vergeboard, and pointed arch or lancet windows. Gothic Revivals in rural environments were most often constructed in wood clapboard, giving rise to the “Carpenter Gothic” vernacular version of the style. As with Greek Revival, there are few Gothic Revival examples in the Downers Grove survey areas. One example is located at 726 Maple Avenue.

Italianate (1840s to 1880s)

Alexander Jackson Downing’s pattern books popularized another picturesque style, the Italianate, which was loosely modeled after the grand villas of northern Italy. Italianate homes first began to appear in most eastern and Midwestern states in the 1840s and soon surpassed the Gothic Revival as the dominant architectural



Italianate house example at 4920 Highland Avenue, 1880s

style, especially in its detached single family home variant. The style declined in popularity after the financial panic of 1873 and the subsequent depression when home building slowed and a new style, the Queen Anne became the dominant residential architectural style in the latter half of the 19th Century.

Italianate homes in Downers Grove are typically constructed in wood clapboard or masonry, two to three stories in height and L-shaped, asymmetrical or gable-fronted in form. Its most recognizable features include an elaborate roof-line cornice with decorative brackets and tall, narrow double-hung windows that are often arched at the top and crowned with a hood mold made of brick or stone. Roofs are usually hipped and low-pitched and porches may be partial, full-front or wrap-around and may often include ornate railings and turned columns. Examples of the Italianate are found in both the E.H. Prince's Subdivision and the Maple Road Corridor.

Second Empire (1850s to 1890s)

Second Empire is the first of the Victorian Era styles that would prevail in American domestic architecture for much of the later part of the 1800s as industrialization and the growth of the railroads would dramatically change home design and production. During this period, balloon frame construction would replace the use of heavy timbers in home construction and

new industrialized processes could produce doors, windows, roofing, siding and other house elements could be produced and transported faster to construction sites than ever before. Second Empire homes became popular throughout most of the eastern and Midwestern United States and were often considered a "modern" alternative to the picturesque styles given its association with the institutional and residential architecture of France's "Second Empire" reign of Napoleon III. The style's most distinctive feature is its mansard roof with pedimented dormers. In addition, Second Empire homes were often rectangular or asymmetrical in building form, constructed usually in masonry and often incorporating a central tower topped with a mansard roof. Other features often copy elements from the Italianate style, including narrow double-hung windows, window hoods, decorative cornice line brackets, and entry, full width or wrap-around porches. The only example of the Second Empire style is at 4705 Prince Street in the E.H. Prince's Subdivision.



Second Empire house, 4705 Prince Street, 1890s

Queen Anne (1880s to 1900s)

Queen Anne prevailed perhaps as the most dominant Victorian domestic architectural style during the last two decades of the 19th Century. Queen Anne homes, cottages and even commercial buildings are found in almost every state from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River, southward to Texas and west across the Rocky Mountain region all the way to California. The style was first

practiced during the mid to late 1800s by a group of English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw who borrowed heavily from earlier Medieval English and Elizabethan vernacular models of residential architecture, often incorporating design features such as half-timbering, projecting gables and massive chimneys. The first American interpretations of the Queen Anne style along the eastern seaboard were later popularized by the proliferation of pattern books and the ready manufacture and distribution of pre-cut materials and architectural features.

In the Midwest, the majority of Queen Anne homes were constructed in wood clapboard and wood shingles in the upper floors. Wide bandboards or wood trim were also often used in many Queen Annes to mark the change in materials from wood clapboard to wood shingles. Masonry Queen Anne homes were also quite common but were more prevalent in cities and urban areas. In form, Queen Anne homes were often asymmetrical building with steeply pitched, cross-gabled roofs incorporate projecting gables ornamented in shingling patterns or gable trusses. Some Queen Annes' have cylinder towers bays that rise through the roof line, recessed balconies, and chimneys with corbelled masonry patterns. Tower bays may also be a notable feature of one to two story Queen Anne commercial buildings. Perhaps one of the most notable features of Queen Anne residences is the elaborate porches that were constructed along with the house — porches with



Queen Anne house constructed in brick at 4710 Highland Avenue, 1860s

elaborate spindlework, balusters and pediments with stick or shingle work. Several Queen Anne homes in Downers Grove also incorporate patterned wood wall surfaces and gable trusses that were meant to mimic Medieval English timbered cottages. The most distinctive Downers Grove Queen Anne homes include 1130 Franklin Street and 4700 Highland Avenue. Queen Anne is also one of the more prevalent architectural styles found in both the E.H. Prince's Subdivision and the Maple Avenue Corridor.

Colonial Revival (1880s – 1950s)

Along with Queen Anne, Colonial Revival is the next most prevalent architectural style found in survey areas with different subtypes and variants across different decades. The Colonial Revival style is often believed to have started after the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition where a “colonial kitchen,” replete with a spinning wheel, was reconstructed. The New York firm of McKim, Mead, White and Bigelow are often considered the first important practitioners of the style with their Appleton House in Lennox, Massachusetts and the Taylor House in Newport, Rhode Island their most significant works in the style.

The most common architectural features of Colonial Revival homes include columned entry porches; entry doors with transoms, sidelights, and elaborate surrounds; symmetrical building forms; hipped roofs; and, double-hung, multi-



Queen Anne house at 1130 Franklin Avenue, 1890s

paned windows that are often paired together. In Downers Grove, Colonial Revival homes are often two and-a-half floors in height, constructed in brick or stone masonry, and with roof materials consisting of asphalt shingles. In addition, many homes have one-story enclosed side wings that usually fronted the street if the home was oriented to the side yard.

Colonial Revivals are also found in different building forms apart from their customary rectangular, symmetrical versions. Foursquare forms, which are characterized as simple, two-story boxes, became increasingly popular in Midwestern small towns and cities. In Downers Grove, Foursquares were often styled with Colonial Revival details such as columned porches with pedimented gables. Other Revivals were constructed with gambrel roofs and long front



A Colonial Revival Foursquare at 4742 Forest Avenue, 1910s

dormers, typically classified as the Dutch Colonial subtype. Dutch Colonials are particularly prevalent in Downers Grove, especially in some of the Sears Catalog homes, and as opposed to other high style Colonial Revivals, were often clad in wood bevel siding and shingling. Colonial Revival styles were later found in more simplified versions in post World War II Ranch forms as both single story and Split-Level residences. In Downers Grove, Colonial Revivals are found in all four survey areas. Distinctive Colonial Revival examples include 4742 Forest Avenue, 5327 Brookbank Road (page 10), and 1120 Prairie Avenue.



A Colonial Revival house at 1120 Prairie Avenue, c. 1925

Classical Revival (1895 – 1950s)

The Chicago Worlds Columbian Exposition in 1893 revived interest in Classical architecture as the Fair's planners mandated a classical theme be used in all buildings constructed for the Fair. From the mid 1890s to the middle of the 20th Century, Classical Revival became a popular style for both commercial and residential buildings. Signature features of Classical Revival homes are full height porches supported by columns with Corinthian or Ionic capitals and topped with a pedimented gable. Such homes are often two and-a-half stories in height, rectangular and symmetrical in form, and constructed in stone or brick that was often painted white. Front entrances may have columned surrounds and arched or broken pediments above the door. One representative example of the style is the commercial building at 4920 Main Street.

A variant of Classical Revival is the Beaux Arts style, which was popular in the United States from the mid 1880s to the 1930s, and often used for monumental commercial buildings such as banks and office edifices, although the style was extensively employed for mansions of the wealthy throughout the United States. Beaux Arts buildings share many of the same features and elements of Classical Revival buildings but they may also incorporate balustrades at the roof line, elaborate window surrounds and crowns, pilasters and floral patterns and shield as decorative elements. The Toon Funeral Home at 4920

Main Street and the Metra Train Station at 1000 Burlington are the best examples of the style, both found in downtown Downers Grove.



A Classical Revival building, Toon Funeral Home, at 4920 Main Street, 1950s

Tudor Revival (1890s - 1940s)

The Tudor Revival style features steeply pitched roofs, a dominant front gable, half-timbering, masonry walls, massive chimneys and narrow casement windows. Tudor Revival is based on late Medieval English prototypes from grand manors to thatched roof cottages and was popularized in the United States during the same period as the Colonial Revival prior to World War II. Tudor Revival homes can be found in the Denburn Woods and E.H. Prince's subdivisions and the Maple Avenue Corridor. Representative examples of the style include 4716 Prince Street and 1228 Hawthorne Lane, designed by noted Hinsdale architect Harold Zook.



Tudor Revival houses at 1228 Hawthorne Lane, designed by Harold Zook, c. 1935.



Tudor Revival houses at 4716 Prince Street, c. 1925

French Eclectic (1910s – 1945)

Like Tudor Revival, French Eclectic or French country house architecture became a popular style during the 1920s, 30s and 40s. French Eclectic became a popular design style in the United States as soldiers returning from France in the aftermath of World War I gained first-hand familiarity of the country house prototypes in Normandy and Brittany. Published photographic studies of the prototypes were also circulated to American architects who quickly adapted the style for residential commissions. French Eclectic homes were usually designed in brick or stone with steeped asymmetrical roofs, massive masonry chimneys, and a dominant tower bay and multi-paned casement windows. The French Eclectic can mostly be found in the Denburn Woods Subdivision with representative examples of the style located at 1 Lindenwald Place (see page 14) and 1318 Turvey Road.



A French Eclectic country house at 1318 Turvey Road, 1941

Craftsman (1900s – 1920s)

The Craftsman Style derived from the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th century. The Arts and Crafts Movement valued hand craftsmanship, natural materials and simplicity in design and detailing that rejected Victorian era excesses and mass-production. Craftsman Style houses feature a mix of wood clapboards, shingles, stucco and sometimes half-timbering. If stone or brick was used, it was typically laid to look more rustic, with rough cuts and uneven application. Roofs are low-sloped hipped or gable roofs with deep overhangs supported by wood brackets and knee-braces. In one-story versions, the attic space is made usable with dormers or windows set in the gable ends. Wide front porches are common and the porches are often supported by rustic brick or stone piers. Windows are usually double hung or casement types with multi-paned or diamond-paned glass.

The Craftsman Style was applied to common building types such as the Bungalow and Gable-Fronted houses. The style was popularized by national design plan books and magazines such as *The Craftsman*, published by Gustav Stickley between 1901 and 1916. Though high-style, expensive Craftsman homes are not uncommon, it was generally promoted as an affordable, middle-class style for Americans and was, ironically, mass-produced. Craftsman homes are found mainly in the E.H. Prince's Subdivision with some examples along the Maple Avenue Corridor. Representative



A Craftsman Bungalow at 4613 Saratoga Avenue, 1910s

examples of the Craftsman style include 4800 Middaugh Avenue and 4613 Saratoga Avenue.



A Craftsman Bungalow at 4800 Middaugh Avenue, 1910s

Prairie (1900s - 1920s)

The Prairie Style is largely derived from the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th and early 20th Century, and largely practiced by prominent architect Frank Lloyd Wright and his contemporaries in Oak Park and River Forest, Illinois. The Prairie Style was Wright's own unique vision of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and was suited to the open land and flat prairies of the Midwest. As such, the style emphasized horizontality with low-slope hipped roofs, deep eave overhangs and horizontal bands of trim. Prairie houses are generally of lower overall height compared to Victorian houses, even when two stories tall, and emphasize the use of straightforward building materials of stucco and wood. Wood siding is often horizontal board and batten rather than clapboards. Windows are typically single-pane casements, often featuring art glass, and usually banded together in rows to emphasize horizontality and provide wide vistas to nature. Garden walls are also common as a way to tie the house to the landscape.

Most early examples before World War I are high-style and designed by the best known Prairie School architects of the time. After the war, the style's popularity declined but continued to influence mass-produced housing such as bungalows and American Foursquares, which

are prevalent in Downers Grove. Bungalow or Foursquare Prairie-styled houses typically feature stucco exteriors with hipped roofs and deep eave overhangs, some horizontal trim and bands of windows. Wide front porches were also typical. Prairie homes can be found in both the Maple Avenue Corridor and the E.H. Prince's Subdivision with distinctive examples located at 811 Maple and 4800 Oakwood Avenues.



Prairie-styled homes at 811 Maple Avenue (above) and 4800 Oakwood Avenue (below), both 1910s

Chicago Bungalow (1907 – 1930s)

The Chicago Bungalow is a unique style of the bungalow house type that developed in Chicago and spread throughout the Great Lakes region. The style features all of the typical characteristics of a Bungalow house, such as being one or one-and-one-half stories with a low gable or hipped roof, front porch and an efficient, compact floor plan. However, the Chicago Bungalow developed to suit the unique conditions found in the region,

including weather and land costs. Chicago Bungalows are rectangular in plan with the short end facing the street. This allows construction on narrow lots. Instead of a wide front porch, most have a small, open entry porch with the rest of the house front enclosed as a sun-porch. Almost all Chicago Bungalows are of brick construction, which was a requirement in the city, but occasionally stucco was used. To save costs, the front sometimes featured nicer looking “face brick” while the sides and rear used cheaper “common brick.” Roofs are low hipped or gable roofs with modest overhangs. Roof dormers are customary, which allowed for usable space in the attic. Windows are typically double hung and often the front sun-porch windows have Prairie Style art glass. Front sun-porches with octagonal bays are sometimes referred to as Octagon Bungalows.



A Chicago Bungalow at 4803 Saratoga Avenue, 1910s

Chicago Bungalows were generally mass-produced for working-class families. As such, they had minimal ornamentation but sometimes had stone or terra cotta details at the entry or on the front. Some versions were designed for wealthier homeowners and were highly ornamented with expensive tile roofs and arched windows. The style developed in the housing boom after World War I and ended with the housing bust of the Depression. Chicago Bungalows are mostly found in the E.H. Prince's Subdivision. One distinctive example of the style is located at 4803 Saratoga Avenue.

Spanish Revival (1920s – 1940s)

The Spanish Revival Style was inspired by Spanish colonial architecture of the Southwest and Mexico and its distinguishing characteristics are asymmetry, stucco exteriors and red-tile roofs. Front porches are rare but many houses have a terrace or stoop and a small protective overhang to protect the entry. Side porches protected under arched arcades are not uncommon. Arched doors or windows and exposed wood beams and protruding “vigas” that appear to support the roof are also typical features. Fancier houses will have wrought iron railings, balconies and light fixtures and ornamentation such as twisted columns. In the survey areas, one example of the style, located in the E.H. Prince’s Subdivision at 4744 Linscott Avenue, is a distinctive Spanish Revival in a Bungalow form.



A Spanish Revival Bungalow at 4744 Linscott Avenue, 1920s

Art Deco/Art Moderne (1925 – 1940s)

The Art Deco/Art Moderne Styles primarily developed as a commercial building style during the mid-1920s and early 1930s but were also found in houses and multi-family residential buildings. Art Deco often featured traditional commercial building forms but with specialized ornamentation of garlands, zig-zags, flutes and chevrons. This ornamentation was typically featured in relief, which meant it was carved shallow and appeared flat.

Art Moderne was a “streamlined” version of a modern building, reflecting the forms of fast cars, and aerodynamic-looking planes, trains and steamer ships of the 1930s. Art Moderne buildings tend to have rounded corners, porthole windows and railings similar to those on passenger steamers. Since it was a modern style, roofs were typically flat, façade ornamentation minimal and exterior materials consisting of stucco, concrete and sometimes brick. Windows often have steel frames with glass block used as a common window choice at entries or bathrooms. The only example of the Art Deco/Art Moderne style, located downtown Downers Grove, is a Two-Part Commercial building at 4949 Forest Avenue.



An Art Deco/Art Moderne commercial building at 4949 Forest Avenue, c. 1929

Minimal Traditional (1930s - 1960s)

The Minimal Traditional Style developed in the 1930s and was popular throughout the 1940s, ‘50s and ‘60s. The style is a simplification of the Colonial Revival but without the more detailed ornamentation of a full-sized Colonial house. Minimal Traditional houses are typically one and one-half stories and have hipped or gabled roofs with short overhangs. The entry is often protected by a small porch, stoop, terrace or roof overhang. Exterior materials varied and included brick, stone, wood clapboards, aluminum siding and asbestos siding. Two siding choices were often included to provide character to the home. Windows are sometimes flanked with shutters and it is common

to find a picture or bay window in the living room. Some houses will have either individual roof dormers or one wide shed dormer.

The Minimal Traditional Style accommodated an owner's desire for a more traditional-looking home that was easier to build and cost less than a more highly-designed and ornamented Colonial Revival house. For these reasons, the style was quite popular during the Depression and in the post-World War II housing boom. Distinctive examples of the style include 4509 and 4636 Linscott Avenue. The Minimal Traditional can be found in all four survey areas.



Minimal Traditional homes at 4509 and 4636 Linscott Avenue, 1950s.

International Style (1930s - 1960s)

The International Style evolved in the 1930s from Europe as a rejection of historic associations and revivals. The style often has concrete, stucco and brick as exterior building materials, no applied

ornamentation and flat roofs with parapets instead of overhangs. There are no porches but a projecting canopy might offer protection at a building entry. In lieu of porches, cantilevered balconies with solid walls are often included, especially in multi-family buildings. Windows often have steel frames and are larger picture or casement windows. Commercial buildings in the International Style built after World War II often have glass curtain walls with steel or aluminum frames. The style became very popular in the Chicago region after Mies van der Rohe, its most famous exponent and practitioner of the style, emigrated to Chicago from Germany in 1938. The style can be found in the Denburn Woods, Shady Lane Estates, and the E.H. Prince's subdivisions. The best example of this style is located at 209 Shady Lane.



An International Style house at 209 Shady Lane, 1970s

Mid Century Modern (1940s - 1960s)

Mid-Century Modern is a more ornamented and visually-enriched version of the International Style. Though devoid of traditional ornament, the style does feature ornamental applications such as carved relief stone panels or wall panels of differing materials. The exterior materials are also more varied and include stone, brick, concrete block and sometimes wood clapboards or aluminum siding. Typically, several materials may be used in a typical Mid-Century Modern building. Long, narrow Roman-style brick, sometimes stacked in neat rows, is often the primary building material.

Sometimes, concrete blocks are used as a low-relief feature or cut-out geometric shape. Roofs vary from low-sloped gable and hipped roofs to flat, but they often have deep, cantilevered overhangs. Windows are often framed in steel as casements or multi-pane picture windows that sometimes turn the corner. Glass block windows are common for entries and bathrooms. Porches are rare but a projecting canopy or roof overhang will often protect the entry. Representative style examples include 4101 and 4105 Fairview Avenue in the Shady Lane Estates Subdivision, although other Mid-Century homes can also be found in the Denburn Woods and E.H. Prince's subdivisions.



Mid-Century Modern Ranch homes at 4101 (above) and 4105 Fairview Avenue (below), 1950s

Late Modern Eclectic (1970s – Present)

The Late Modern Eclectic Style developed in the 1970s as an alternative to Modernist buildings, but with greater detailing and ornamentation similar to the earlier Minimal Traditional Style.

It can be difficult to describe the characteristics of the style since by definition it is highly eclectic in nature. Typical characteristics include traditional exterior materials such as brick, stone and clapboard siding, or sometimes with aluminum or vinyl. In most cases, two or more materials are combined to provide visual interest to the building's elevation. There is rarely any distinct stylistic ornamentation to such homes, but shutters and Colonial-styled porch posts are common. The entry is usually protected by a portico and large, attached garages are the norm. The overall building massing is usually irregular and asymmetrical but may also be found in a Ranch or Split-Level form. The Late Modern Eclectic Style is often referred to as Neo-Eclectic or Postmodern. Examples of the Late-Modern Eclectic can be found in all four survey areas with representative examples located at 208 and 217 41st Street in the Shady Lane Estates Subdivision..



Late Modern Eclectic homes at 208 41st Street, 1973 (above) and 217 41st Street, 1972 (below)

Neo Revival (1980s – Present)

The Neo Revival Style is a latter-day revival of earlier architectural styles, mostly the European-based 1920s such as the Tudor Revival and French Eclectic, but also the Queen Anne, Craftsman and Prairie styles as well. Neo-Revival homes will have many of the characteristics and features of the original style but are interpreted and constructed with modern materials and scale. The exteriors will range from brick, stone, stucco, synthetic stucco, vinyl siding or fiber cement siding depending on the original style's material pallet. Roof forms will also vary depending on the style revived. In addition, windows usually do not closely match the openings and proportions of the original style. Ornamentation and detailing is often simplified and large attached garages are the norm. Neo Revivals are mostly found in its Denburn Woods and E.H. Prince's subdivisions as well as the Maple Avenue Corridor. Representative examples of the style include 1245 Hawthorne Lane in Denburn Woods and 4515 Linscott Avenue in the E.H. Prince Subdivision.



Neo Revival homes at 1245 Hawthorne Lane (above) and 4515 Linscott Avenue (below), both 2000s