

# The Housing Styles of Cambridge

This guide is to help property owners and developers recognize and understand the architectural patterns of the established neighborhoods of the City of Cambridge, generally located within the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) zoning districts. What follows is a sampling of the various styles of houses that exist, with a brief description of the characteristics that define each style. Our goal is to help you design your in-fill project following these styles, which will help to maximize the value of your project, while at the same time it preserves the aesthetic value of the surrounding neighborhood. While many of these examples also exist in the city's Historic Preservation District, please refer to the **Historic Preservation Guidelines** if your project is planned for that area.

## *Bungalow Style*

Found in all areas of the NC zone, but prevalent in the neighborhoods south of Washington Street and east of Race Street. This style was introduced in the 1930's

- Wide front porch
- 1-1/2 story with wide dormers front and back
- Clapboard or Wood Shingle siding
- Broad overhangs at eaves and gables
- 6/1 or 9/1 divided light windows.
- Brick foundation, chimneys and accents



## *Cottage Style*

Found in all areas of the NC zone. This style was a popular small design that has its roots around the turn of the last century, but examples around town have been built at various times since then.

- Front porches, ranging from a simple covered stoop to a fully enclosed sunroom
- 1 or 1-1/2 story living space
- Simple gable roof lines
- Eave and gable overhangs
- Clapboard siding, wide window trims, shutters.



### ***Ranch Style***

Found in most areas of the NC districts. Ranch homes began appearing in the 1950's, and are prevalent in neighborhoods that were built in that time frame. There are a number of sub-categories within this style, such as the larger brick ramblers in Edlon Park, and the contemporary ranches in the neighborhoods around St. Clair School.

- 1 story of living space
- Articulated facades and roof lines
- Simple trim treatments
- Siding or brick exteriors
- Lower pitch roof with wide overhangs



### ***Colonial***

Primarily found in the West End, but examples exist in all areas of Cambridge.

This style became popular in the 1940's.

- 2 to 2-1/2 stories of living space
- Symmetrical façade (center entry, evenly spaced features to the left and right.)
- Double hung windows with 6/6 divided light
- Smaller entry porch at front door, may be covered or not
- Wide clapboard siding
- Shutters
- Shingled returns at side gables
- Gabled dormers



### ***American Four Square***

This style was popularized in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was included as part of the Sears Catalog for a number of years. Examples can be found in various neighborhoods around the NC zones, but concentrations can be found along Race Street below Washington, along Maryland Avenue, and in the West End.

- Generally square foot print
- Hip roof with dormers
- High ceilings on the first floor
- Large windows, with entry door off center to one side.
- Broad front porch
- Clapboard or wood shingle siding



### ***Gothic***

There are several sub-categories of Gothic design in the NC zones, including 1-1/2 and 2 story applications. Earlier examples date to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and are typically 2 stories, which can be found in several areas of the NC zones. Smaller homes with Gothic features made a revival in the mid 1950's and early 60's, and can be found primarily in East Cambridge.

#### ***Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century 2-story***

- High pitched roof features
- Tall narrow windows with 2/2 divided light
- Porches and gables detailed with scrollwork

#### ***Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revival***

- High pitched roof features
- Curved roof planes
- 1 or 1-1/2 stories of living space.
- Simple sidings and trims



### ***Victorian***

Built between the turn of the last century into the 1920's, this is probably the most prevalent style of construction throughout the city. This was the period of Cambridge's most rapid growth as the Phillips Packing Company expanded as the area's most significant employer.

- High pitched rooflines with returns at the eaves.
- Overhangs at eaves and gables
- Gable windows
- 2 to 2-1/2 stories of living space
- Front porch with detailed columns and railings
- Off-center entry doors with sidelights and transoms
- Tall windows with wide trims and 2/2 divided lights
- Shutters



### ***Cape Cod***

A compact design popularized after World War 2. Examples can be found throughout the NC districts, although concentrations of Cape Cods exist in East Cambridge along several streets.

- 1-1/2 Stories of living space
- Individual dormers facing front
- Roof pitch typically 9/12 or higher
- May or may not include front porch
- Main roof ridge runs parallel to front of house



### *Queen Anne*

While most of the examples of this style in Cambridge are concentrated in the Historic District, they can be found in some of the other older neighborhoods built around the turn of the last century, such as Race Street below Washington St, and Maryland Avenue between Hayward Street and Rt. 50. Often mistaken for “Victorian” because of their ornamental nature, the Queen Anne style is distinguished by its asymmetry, and use of a variety of architectural shapes and roof lines.



- Large covered porches
- Often includes large bay windows, round turrets or other unusual massing
- Roof lines can be a combination of styles
- Many features, such as roof lines, window placements, and wings are asymmetrical
- Often features a variety of ornamental trims.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Public Works, at 410-228-1955.

## Residential Roof Styles

Use this guide to identify the various types of roof designs that are prevalent in the neighborhood surrounding your project.

### Hip

- Primary Roof is constructed of generally triangular planes that join at the peak to form a pyramid. Found on a variety of architectural styles.



### Gable

- Very common design, simply two roof planes that meet at the ridge, forming a triangular wall at either the front and back or at the sides of the house. Found on a variety of architectural styles.



### Turned Gable

- A gable roof with a third gable that projects perpendicular to the main ridge.



### **Mansard**

- Roof is divided into two parts
- Top is very low pitch with hips
- Sides are very steeply pitched to maximize floor space within.
- Attic windows are typically situated in narrow dormers.



### **Gambrell**

- Roof plane is segmented to have the appearance of a “barn” style roof
- Typically, the second floor is the same dimension as the first floor.
- Gable overhangs establish the Gambrell look.



### **Shed Dormer**

- Single roof plane over a window or group of windows projecting from the main roof.



### **Combination Roof**

- Any roof that combines elements of two or more of the above styles.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Public Works at 410-228-1955.