

# Colonial Revival Style Guide

**FL**  **RENCE**  
ALABAMA



## Colonial Revival (1880-1955)

As seen in Walnut Street, Wood Avenue, Cherry Street, Wilson Park, Seminary O'Neal, McFarland Heights, College Place, and Locust Street Historic Districts.

# Summary of Characteristics

Following the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893, which emphasized historical styles, Americans developed a renewed interest in Colonial styles. Though not historically accurate copies of said styles, the Colonial Revival style incorporated many elements inspired by its Colonial predecessors (Georgian and Federal styles). Sites like Colonial Williamsburg contributed to the style's popularity in the South in the 1930s and 40s, and America's entrance into World War II and a corresponding surge of patriotism renewed American's interest once again, meaning the life of this revival style was long, spanned several decades, and was ultimately applied to a variety of architectural forms.



## Symmetry

Like its Colonial-era predecessors most Colonial Revival facades are balanced symmetrically with symmetrical window placements and a centered door.



Several apartment buildings throughout the districts were constructed in the Colonial Revival style



## Door surround

Front doors are often accentuated with traditional details, such as a decorative crown supported by pilasters and/or a covered entry porch supported by slender columns; fanlights or other transom and sidelights may also be present.

## Windows

Windows are typically double-hung wood windows, multi-paned (either six, eight, nine or twelve panes, sometimes over a single large pane on the lower sash), sometimes paired (their historical antecedents were never paired), often adorned by louvered or raised-panel wood shutters. Shutters should be appropriately sized to fit the windows they are meant to cover, even if they are decorative only.



## Subtypes and the Modern era



*Dutch Colonial* – The most common subtype in our region, the Dutch Colonial subtype is identified by the presence of a gambrel roof on an otherwise Colonial Revival styled house.

*American Small House* – The emergence of the American Small House and the popularity of the Colonial Revival style coincided following WWII. Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loans offered returning GIs long-term mortgages for purchase of a new home but favored traditional styles and modest floorplans. The Colonial Revival style suited FHA requirements, however, stylistic details were applied sparingly to American Small Houses. The presence of shutters and multi-paned windows could be enough to classify an American Small House as Colonial Revival style.



*Ranch* – Ranch houses of the mid-twentieth century took many forms and often had applied elements from other styles. A Colonial Revival ranch may have any number of the following details: a front porch portico with columns, sidelights, multi-pane windows, shutters, dentil or cornice molding, brick quoins at the house's corners, or even a Colonial Revival lamppost by the driveway. In many cases, the presence of multi-paned, double-hung windows and shutters is enough to classify a ranch house as Colonial Revival when compared with its more Plain-styled or Contemporary counterparts.

