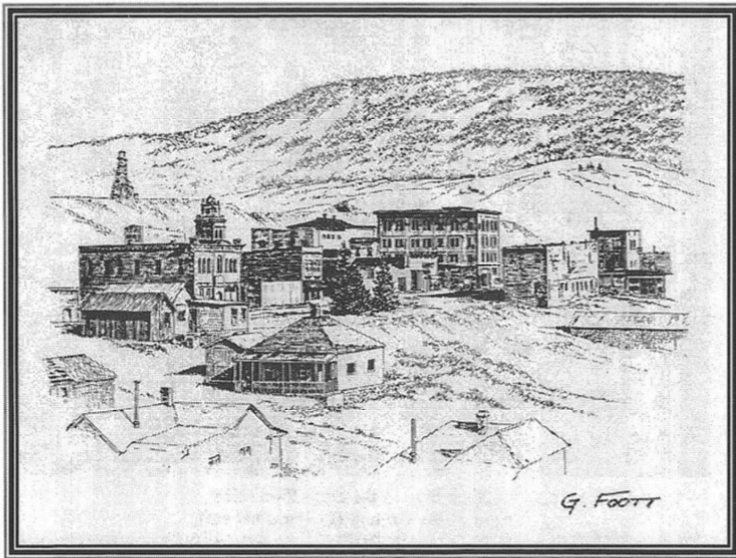


Victor, Colorado
The City of Mines With
Architecture Worth Preserving



An Informational Guide to Preserving
Our Architectural Heritage

Sponsored by the Victor Heritage Society

Victor: The City of Mines With Architecture Worth Preserving

The City of Victor is regarded as one of the most intact historic mining communities in the Rocky Mountain West. Nearly every building and house in the city was built between 1895 and 1905 when Victor's mining-dependent economy began to collapse.

After the 1890s gold boom, decades of decline prevented modern development and helped preserve the city's turn-of-the-century structures. It is still possible to visit Victor and not be quite sure which century you are in. Would you have guessed this picture was taken in the 1990s?



Historic Preservation--An Economic Development Opportunity

With the advent of legalized gaming in nearby Cripple Creek and a revival of gold mining, the population of Victor more than doubled in the 1990s. But growth in the resident population (now in the range of 600) is unlikely to generate enough local business to revive the Historic Business District, which was built to support a population of more than 8,000. That will require redevelopment of family-oriented heritage tourism. Interestingly, this is an effort that neighboring Cripple Creek is also pursuing to bolster its gaming dominated economy.

In Victor, many long-vacant buildings and dwellings have recently been restored. Nevertheless, the city's historic fabric remains vulnerable to insensitive new development that could impede the possibility of redeveloping family-oriented heritage tourism.

To protect this economic development opportunity, the city's first preservation ordinance was adopted in 1985 when the Downtown Victor Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1996 the City created the Historic Overlay Zone that encompasses the entire city.

Victor's Historic Residential Architectural Styles

Because Victor was built in the late 1890s through the early 1900s, the city's residential architecture reflects influences from both centuries. Most of the homes are vernacular—simple dwellings constructed by local contractors, craftsmen, or homeowners using building forms, construction techniques, and materials common to the area.

Log cabins were the city's earliest vernacular homes. Most were built prior to the 1899 fire that destroyed much of the city. Historic log cabins can still be found scattered throughout the city.



Gabled houses were built in the 1890s. Examples include homes with a *front-gable* (200 block of S. 2nd, 200 block of S. 3rd, 300 block of S. 4th), a *gabled-L* (109 S. 6th), and a less common *side-gable* (110 S. 1st).



Front Gable



Gabled-L

Hipped Box—These small, square-shaped, one-story houses have a pyramid-shaped roof. This style frequently was used as housing for miners in Colorado in the early twentieth century. Nearly all have a front porch and fancier versions have a small gable added to the front. Examples include 503 and 505 Portland, 219 Spicer, 502 and 504 S. 3rd.



Queen Anne—This asymmetrical house style is marked by multiple gables and two-story construction. Features include decorative shingles and/or a sunburst in the gable end, decorative woodwork, turrets, bay windows, and multi-paned windows. Because Victor was built at the close of the 19th century, our version of the Queen Anne style is less fancy than those in other cities. Some examples include 602 Victor, 412 Portland, and 217 S. 2nd.



Edwardian Vernacular—This post-Victorian-era style resembles Queen Anne but with fewer decorative details. These were larger houses for merchants, mine managers, and business professionals. Elements include gabled roofs, a pedimented gable, returning gables, gable-end shingling, and a front porch. Several in Victor also have Palladian windows. Examples include 422 S. 4th, 122 S. 6th, 406 and 408 Lee.



Restoring Your Historic Victor Residence

The city shares your interest in maintaining the historic exterior appearance of residential neighborhoods. How you remodel or change the interior of your house is completely up to you.

In 1998 the Victor Historic Preservation Commission developed the *Victor Design Guidelines Handbook: A Guide to Preserving Our Architectural Heritage*. The handbook contains a wealth of information, photographs, and suggestions to guide exterior restoration projects for your historic Victor home. Copies are available in the Victor Library and the City Hall. A small portion of that material is summarized in this brochure.



City provisions for the Downtown Historic District, the Historic Overlay Zone, and the exterior Design Guidelines all encourage maintaining the integrity and authenticity of Victor's citywide historic character-- the "streetscape" appearance. Adherence to the zoning and exterior design guidelines increases the value of your house as well as all other property in the city. This applies to new construction projects as well as to modifications in existing structures.

Planning Your Preservation Project

The following recommendations for alternations to a historic building or dwelling are adapted from The Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines.

- Identify the features that define the character of your historic house. (Some of the most prevalent "character-defining features" for historic Victor residences are listed in the section that follows.)

- If a feature is intact and in good condition, maintain it and preserve it.
- If the feature is deteriorated or damaged, repair it to its original condition. Elements to be repaired include brackets, dentils, steps, porch railings, porch balusters, windows, brickwork, woodwork, and other items.
- If it is not possible to repair the feature, then replace it with one similar to the original.
- If a feature is missing entirely, reconstruct it from historic photographs or other evidence.

Character-Defining Features

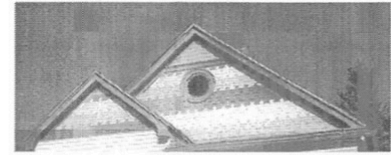
For many historic Victor houses, the “character-defining features” include the roof shape and pitch, lapped siding, vertically-proportioned double-hung windows, porches, and decorative features.

Building Shape--The floor plans of historic Victor houses were rectangular, L-shaped, T-shaped, or square. Most homes were narrow and deep, because they were built on the standard 25' by 125' lot, sometimes mere inches from the neighboring house. They were built lengthwise on a lot, with the narrow width facing the street. Historic dwellings were also typically one to two stories in height.

The entryway and often a porch were at the front of the house. Additions were built onto the rear. The houses were at the front of the lot, near the street edge, and secondary houses, alley houses, sheds, outhouses, and other structures were built at the rear of the lot.

- Preserve the original building shape. Additions should be toward the rear of the house, and should not dominate the original part.
- Maintain the original height of the house. Most dwellings had one or two stories.

Roof Forms--Most historic single family dwellings in Victor have pitched gable or hip roof forms. The steep roof pitch helped snow shed. It also allowed living space in the upper story.



12-12 Roof Pitch →

- Preserve the form and pitch of the original roof—either hipped or gabled with a 12-12 pitch (45° angle).
- Use the roof form of the original dwelling for roofs of additions. Exceptions to this might include porches, bay windows, or small, rear, shed-roofed additions.
- Dormers should use the same roof form as the main roof.
- Skylights should protrude less than four inches from the roof.

Building Materials--The building material most commonly used in Victor was wood. Houses were covered in wooden clapboards, and often trimmed with cornerboards and friezeboard. Shingles were often used in gable end treatments. There are few fully-shingled dwellings in Victor and brick masonry examples are also rare.

Foundations were of stone, brick, or simply wood. Some are covered in patterned rolled asphalt, stamped metal, or plywood; but many houses have no foundation at all.

- Appropriate exterior materials are lap siding (no wider than four inches), stone, wooden shingles, board and batten, or log.
- Preserve original siding if possible. Repair deterioration and replace individual units if too deteriorated to repair.
- Match original siding and trim details when restoring the original house and on additions.
- Appropriate paint colors include white, pale yellow, or muted colors such as gray, dark brown, dark green, and dark red. Window frames, gabled-end shingles, cornerboards, and friezeboard can be painted a contrasting color.
- Avoid covering original siding with metal or aluminum siding. If this must be done, be sure that the original shape and trim of

window and door openings are not altered. Synthetic siding should be no more than four inches in width.

- Consider removing synthetic siding, and scraping and repainting the original wood siding.

Porches--Nearly all Victor residences have front porches. Some are full front porches or a porch constructed in an ell. Others have a "cutaway porch" built as part of the house and sheltered by the



Full Front Porch



Vestibule



Stoop Cover with
Wooden Porch Frieze



Enclosed
Porch
←



Cutaway Porch

primary roof. People often glassed in the porch to shelter the entryway and to capture sunlight. Fancier houses had windowed vestibules, others had just a simple stoop cover. Porches often had ornamental features such as turned porch posts, decorative brackets, or wooden porch friezes.

- Original porches with their details should be carefully preserved.
- Avoid enclosing porches. If doing so, enclose in multi-paned windows similar to those found in Victor.
- A porch should be in character with the house. A large, fancy porch is appropriate for a larger and more elaborate house. A simple house should have a small and simple porch.

- Use wooden railing and balusters instead of contemporary wrought iron railing.
- Compatible porches can be added by following the pattern of the neighboring dwellings or a similar house in the city.

Doors and Entries--Entries to residential buildings usually faced the street and consisted of a front porch sheltering the doorway(s). They were typically in the street-facing façade or located in an ell with a porch. Doors most often had glass on the top and were solid wood on the bottom. Many of these historic doors remain, with their paneled design adding character to the dwelling.



Historic Half Lite
and Screen Door



Double
Doors

- Preserve or restore the location and orientation of original entries.
- Repair and preserve historic doors, screen doors, and door transoms.
- If the door is too deteriorated for repair, try to replace it with one that matches the original as closely as possible.
- Rather than a storm door of bright metal, use painted wood, anodized (brown-coated) metal or painted metal.
- Consider installing an authentic-looking screen door, which can be purchased at a nearby lumber or building material store.

Windows--Most historic windows are *vertically-proportioned* (often with a height roughly twice the width), double-hung wood sash and frame. However, different window styles gave a house personality and style. **Double hung windows** were used as front windows and on sides of houses. **Bay windows**, which provide an

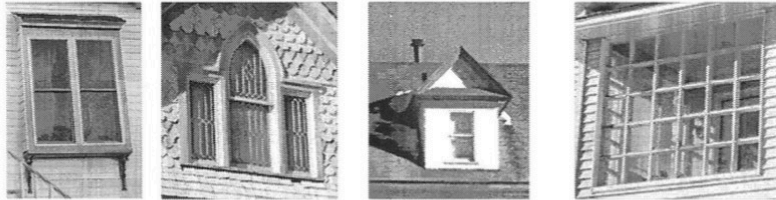


Paired Double
Hungs



Bay
Window

abundance of light, were either built as part of the house or bought separately and installed (shallow bay window). *Palladian windows* consisted of a pointed- or round-arched central pane flanked by



Shallow Bay

Palladian

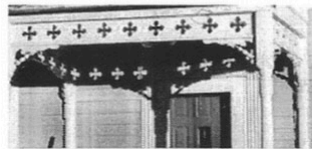
Dormer

Multi-paned

two shorter square or rectangular panes. *Dormer windows* expanded and illuminated the upper story living space. Large, *multi-paned windows* were also common.

- Preserve the existing location and opening size of original windows. Historically, walls had less window than solid space.
- Repair and preserve historic windows, window sashes, and storm windows.
- If a window is too deteriorated for repair, try to replace it with a similar one.
- For storm windows use painted wood, anodized metal or painted metal instead of bright metal.
- Colonial-style shutters are inappropriate.

Decorative Elements--Victor's turn-of-the-century dwellings generally had minimal ornamentation. Residences were predominantly vernacular, rather than Victorian. They did not have abundant architectural ornaments as seen in the Queen Anne and other Victorian era styles. Local ornamentation included turned porch posts, decorative brackets, wooden porch friezes, gable-end shingles, and gable ornaments. Appropriate treatment of architectural details, both

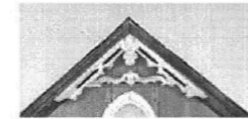


Wooden Porch Frieze ↑



←Decorative Brackets and Turned Porch Post

large and small, is very important to preserving the character of historic houses.



Gable-End Shingles and Gable-End Ornaments

- Preserve original architectural details, such as porch posts, balusters, decorative brackets, window molding, cornerboards, and friezeboard.
- Repair deteriorated elements whenever possible.
- If too deteriorated to repair, replace a decorative element with one that is similar in appearance.
- Consider painting gable end shingles in contrasting colors.
- Consider re-creating an architectural detail from an historic photograph or from a neighboring house.
- If adding decorative details, consider a simplified version.

Foundations & Chimneys--Foundations were especially necessary on the sloping lots of Victor, so a level building site could be created. Foundations were most often rubblestone which often was low-grade mine ore. Brick or simply woodframe were also used, although many houses had no foundations at all. Foundations were sometimes covered over in stucco, stamped metal, or wooden clapboards. Concrete block also has been used for foundations, but should be covered with a more traditional material.

Chimneys were a common feature on every house, since the only heating source was indoor wood-burning stoves and fireplaces. Most chimneys were of brick although a few were of stone. Some have been covered over in stucco.

- Preserve historic foundations and chimneys, whenever possible.
- Match the foundation of the existing building when repairing or replacing a section of foundation, or in an addition. For example, match the color, dimension, and texture of the mortar joints.

- Consider covering a modern concrete block foundation in a more historic material, such as stone facing or stamped metal.

Additions--Large additions and additional stories can change the character and appearance of a historic house. Victor's small vernacular houses were traditionally expanded through the decades by one or more additions. These additions tend to be at the rear. They also were shed roofed and smaller than the original structure.



Historic additions were in the rear, and "stepped down" in scale from the original house.

The section of this house in the foreground is a good example of a compatible new addition.

- Place an addition toward the rear of the original house, so it is not highly visible from the street. A side "ell" might also be an acceptable alternative.
- The mass and scale of an addition should be compatible with the original dwelling and others along the street, typically one- to two-story.
- An addition should not overwhelm or obscure the original building, but instead clearly be of secondary importance.
- Use materials similar to those of the original structure.
- Additional floors should be located to the rear of the structure, rather than adding a second story. "Pop-tops" are discouraged.
- Simple dormers may provide more usable space on upper floors.

Secondary Structures--Victor development was dense. On many residential properties there were secondary structures, placed at the rear of the lot. These consisted of alley houses, small barns, stables, garages, sheds, and outhouses. Many are sided in rough untreated wooden siding and roofed in corrugated metal or rolled asphalt. Throughout Victor these small structures are in disrepair, yet they are an important part of Victor's heritage representing economical land use in this crowded turn-of-the-century city.

- Place secondary structures toward the rear of the lot so they are not visible from the street.
- A secondary structure should not overwhelm the original dwelling.
- Preserve the rustic nature of secondary structures by using rough wooden siding and corrugated roofing.
- Avoid demolishing secondary structures.

Landscaping--Common characteristics of landscaping for Victor's historic houses are wood or metal fences and retaining walls of stone, brick, or wood. Fences were a common landscaping treatment in turn-of-the-century Victor. They were usually of wrought iron, bent wire, or painted wooden pickets. Fences were usually two to four feet in height.

Victor's sloping terrain required retaining walls to create level front or back yards, or divide front yards from the street. Some of these were constructed in the early 1900s employing dry masonry techniques also used in road grading. Other retaining walls were constructed of rubblestone or concrete. A few were built of quarried stone blocks salvaged when some of the city's larger buildings were demolished or burned through the 1900s.

Victor zoning allows certain types of businesses, such as home offices or bed-and-breakfast lodgings, to be located in residential dwellings. Signage for these may be no larger than two square feet.

- Preserve historic fences and retaining walls.
- In the front yard, new fences should be four feet or less in height, and preferably resemble historic ones already seen in the neighborhood. They should also be transparent (have wide spaces between vertical parts).
- Chain link fences are inappropriate in the front yard.
- Name plates and small business signs may not exceed two square feet in area.
- New retaining walls should resemble historic ones already seen in the neighborhood. Historic materials included stone, brick, and wood cribbing.

Compatible Modern Dwellings.

Little new construction took place in Victor after 1905. Recently, large new log homes have been built on the west side of town, near 8th and Portland. The natural materials, front gabled construction, and one- to two-story scale make these dwellings compatible with historic neighborhoods.

Modular homes may offer convenient and affordable shelter. To be compatible with the city's historic neighborhoods, however, a modular should be positioned perpendicular to the street, have a steep (12"-12") roof pitch, horizontal lap-siding, vertically-proportioned windows, and a front porch.

A good example of new construction that fits in with a historic neighborhood is the new house built at 312 S. 4th as a Habitat for Humanity project in 1999. It has a steeply-pitched front-gabled roof, horizontal lap siding, vertically-proportioned windows, and a full front porch resembling historic houses in the neighborhood.



Before commencing any new construction, be sure to check with the Victor City Clerk's Office for compliance with city zoning provisions, as well as ordinances governing the minimum building lot size, set-backs from property lines, building codes and permits, and water and sewer tap policies and fees.

Victor Heritage Society

We hope this brochure has demonstrated to you that Victor is indeed the "City of Mines with Architecture Worth Preserving". As you embark on a project to restore or alter the exterior appearance of your historic Victor residence, or undertake new construction, we hope you will share your plans with the Victor

Heritage Society and acquaint yourself with the research materials available through our group.

Our resource center in the Victor Public Library includes:

- *The Victor Design Guidelines Handbook: A Guide to Preserving Our Architectural Heritage* by Cathleen Norman,
- Pamphlets and brochures on restoration techniques,
- Advice on grant sources and tax credit incentives,
- Information about your historic house or building,
- A local history database,
- Historic maps,
- Copies of Victor photographs from the Denver Public Library, Colorado Historic Society, Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum, Penrose Public Library, Colorado College Tutt Library, Cripple Creek District Museum, and other collections,
- City Directory copies,
- Clipping files, and
- Information provided by previous residents.

The Victor Heritage Society was established in 1999 with the endorsement of the City Council as a 503 (c) (3) nonprofit community service organization working to preserve the heritage of Victor and the surrounding Gold Camp for future generations. Your support is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Visit Our Website — www.VictorHeritageSociety.com

Become a member, learn about our sponsored activities, and access selected materials from our oral history and photographic archives.

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**Cover drawing by George Foott, a well known local artist, who drew inspiration for his work from the heritage of Victor and the surrounding Gold Camp.*

**Brochure design by Doug McNeil.*