

COLONIAL REVIVAL

Parallel with the rapid development of Kensington during the early years of the 20th century was the increasing regard for things associated with the Colonial American period. Indeed, from the first years of the 20th century, the Colonial Revival aesthetic would dominate the architecture of the neighborhood, and has continued to do so.

Interest in the historical origins of the United States of America resulted in the pursuits of knowledge of American colonial and federal architecture. A major stimulus for the interest in this early history was the Centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, at which time the population in Kensington was rapidly increasing. This resulted in a national exhibition, as well as numerous celebrations and commemorative events, which increased the general populace's awareness and regard for the founding years of the United States.



Figure 21: Photograph of 3915 Prospect Street.

The Colonial Revival, like so many revival movements, is a conglomeration of conjectural and archaeological approaches. Generally, the aesthetic and its many variations are based primarily on the late 18th- and early 19th-century precedents associated with the American colonies. The influences of English, Dutch and German architecture on colonial buildings provided much of the inspiration for the East coast areas, while other parts of this country often looked to their own region's colonial roots. Generally, the Colonial Revival has a formal vocabulary based on the architectural elements associated with the Georgian and Federal periods, used with a syntax of symmetry, order, and classical detailing. The architectural style, unlike the similar English Georgian style, is based directly on American precedents. As many of these were influenced directly by English architecture, often there is a fine line between the American Colonial and English Georgian. The style often exhibits an imaginative combination of 18th and 19th century American colonial detailing, using rectangular forms, with gambrel hipped or gabled roofs, with its principal floor at ground or the first level. Red brick in common bond or in Flemish bond with glazed headers is the predominant exterior material; however beveled wood siding can be found in several cases, as can a variety of other materials. Its massing is solid and balanced, in direct contrast to the verticality and intricate volumetric play intrinsic to the Victorian age. The composition of the fully-developed Colonial Revival stresses balance and regularity. The fenestration is ordered, with large multi-light, double-hung windows, as well as myriad variations of the Palladian window, and a centrally located doorway complete with a prominent portico or architrave.

A good example of the Colonial Revival style in the Kensington Historic District is the residence located at 3915 Prospect Avenue. The house has typical Colonial Revival details including an overhanging second story and full-width front porch. The symmetrically balanced facade with double-hung windows and central entry with a transom and side-lights. 10205 Connecticut Avenue exhibits a curved bay window, staggered wood shingles, and flat entablature with pilasters at the entry. The double entry residence at 3928 Washington Street is also a good example of Colonial Revival with its polygonal window dormer and oval windows.

10314 Fawcett Street is an example of the Dutch Colonial Revival style. The Dutch variation on the Colonial Revival style is characterized by the strong cross-gambrel roof forms with multi-sash windows and shutters. Additionally, the interior details such as carved circular cornice moldings and plaster details are reflective of the Colonial Revival style.



Figure 23: Photograph of 10314 Fawcett Street.