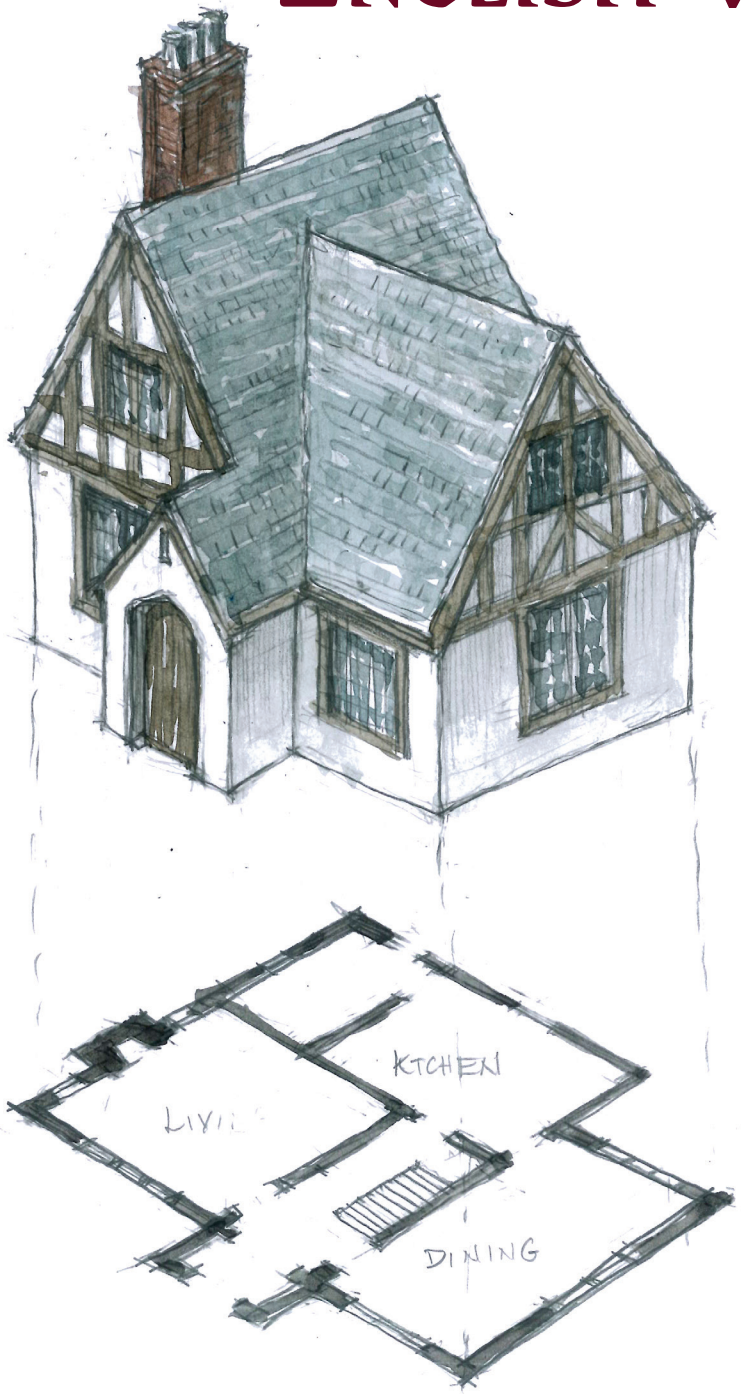
English Vernacular & Tudor

Historic Resources • Santa Barbara, California



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INTRODUCTION

Widely popular throughout the country, Tudor Style architecture takes its well-earned place among the Period Revivals of the early 1900's. Embodying a romantic view with European roots, the Tudor style looks to the English Vernacular and medieval castle for inspiration. The result adds charm and variety to the city of Santa Barbara and is a testament to an era which saw great development in the city.

An English Vernacular house in the San Roque neighborhood has asteeply pitched front gables and an arched wood door.

The house in the Upper East neighborhood has an arched brick door surround and half timbering that decorates the gables.

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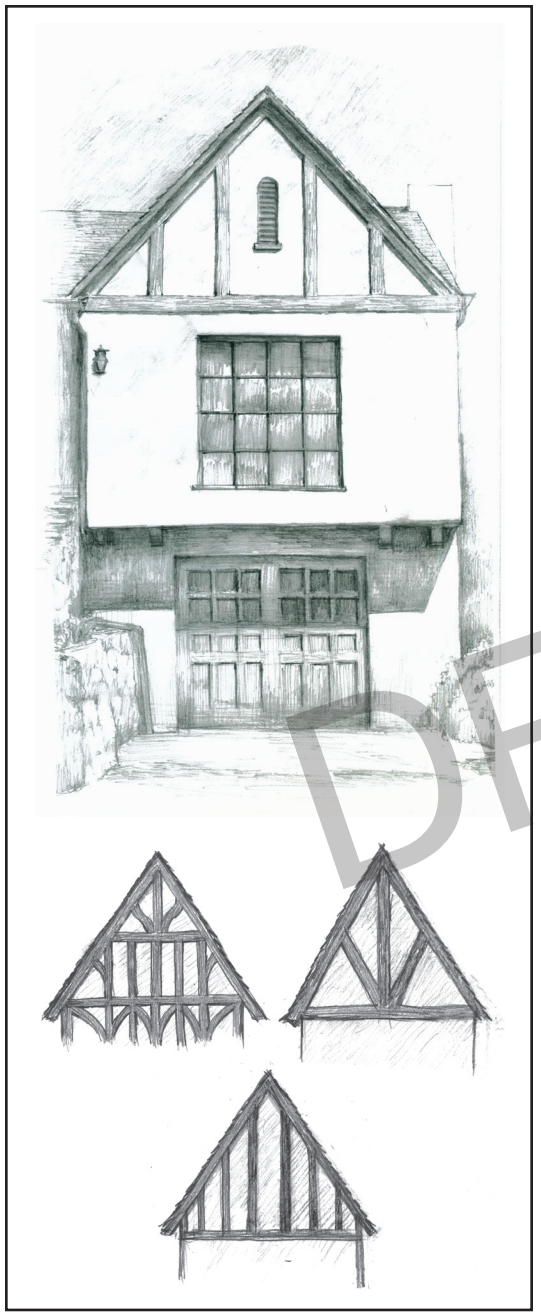
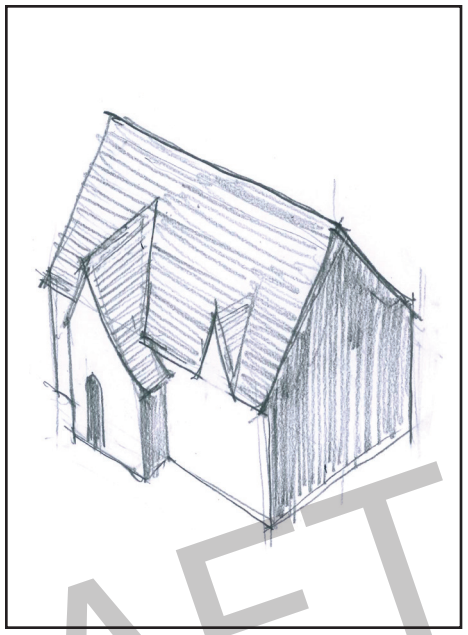
HISTORY

Born into an era that looked to picturesque styles for inspiration, the English Vernacular and Tudor grew in popularity from the beginning of the 1900's until the 1920's, and maintained its strength until the late 1930's.

Although named for the Tudor era in England (early 1500's), the English Vernacular and Tudor styles have a much broader scope of references. The range included much of the Medieval era with everything from thatched-roof cottages to large manors as sources of inspiration. The steeply pitched front-facing gables (which are not common in the English prototypes) became a hallmark of the American English Vernacular and Tudor styles. The half-timbering, which is also found in the preceding Queen Anne and Stick styles of Victorian architecture, was set apart by adhering more closely to the brick and plaster wall finish of their English models.

Santa Barbara is home to a number of English Vernacular and Tudor buildings, which range from the simple plaster cottage types of the English Vernacular, to the more elaborate masonry with highly-patterned half-timbering of the Tudor. In general, Santa Barbara's English Vernacular and Tudor styles tend to have more plaster and less masonry used in its wall treatments than the rest of the country. The style was popular in the 1920's and can be found in the neighborhoods that were developed in that era like the Lower Riviera and the San Roque neighborhoods of Santa Barbara.





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MASSING & OVERALL FORM

The massing of the English Vernacular and Tudor styles is principally composed of a side gable with a cross gable (or gables). Hipped roofs are also used, but less frequently. The roof pitch is typically steep (9:12 or greater) and often includes dormers that help turn the upper attic space into a usable floor. Vergeboards, or large, often decorated boards at the end of the gable, are found in Tudor houses across the country. Stylistically, Santa Barbara tends to be more restrained, and the vergeboard detail is only sometimes used.

CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Gables and Roof Details: The English Vernacular and Tudor style also includes buildings with parapet walls which end the gables (the roof-line tucking below it). English Vernacular and Tudor style roofs were executed in slate, composite shingle, or wood shingle. In some instances, thick, thatched roofs from England were imitated in rolled asphalt.

Porches: English Vernacular and Tudors emphasize the front entrance with steps to a stoop rather than a large covered porch as Victorians and Craftsman have.

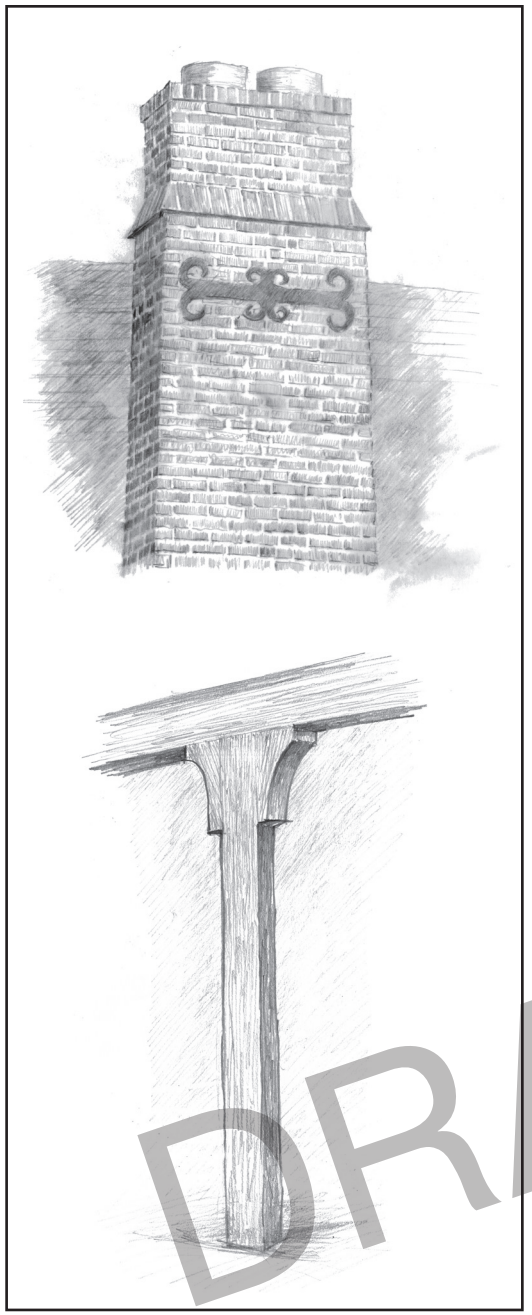
Doors: Doors are typically heavy wood planks and have round arches. They may have accent pieces of stone surrounding the openings, similar to stone quoins. Doors are recessed at the wall plane with stucco return with no trim.

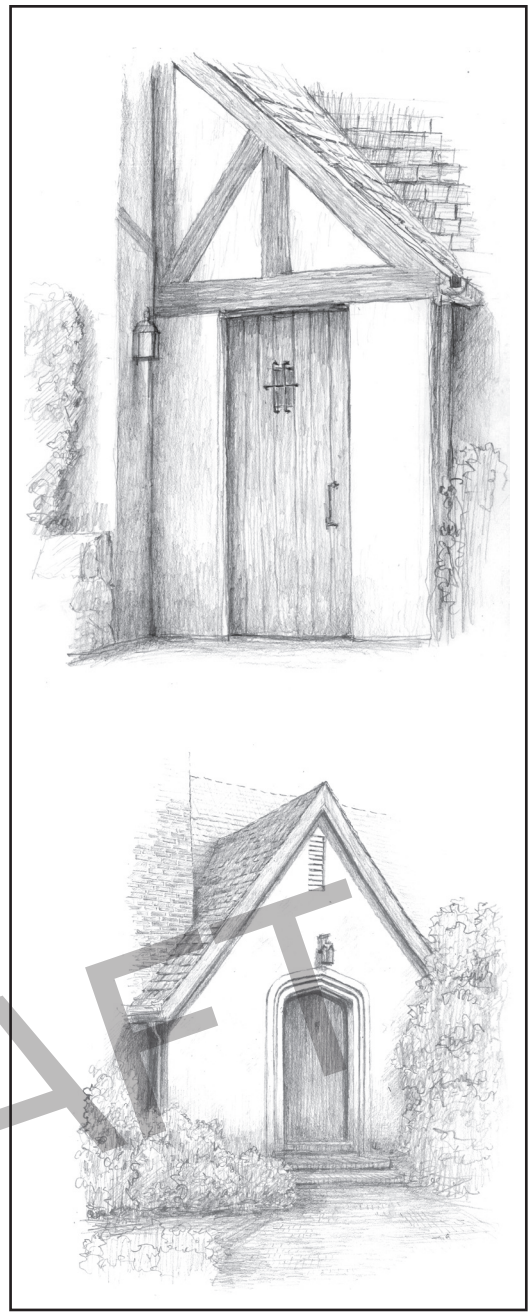
Windows: Windows are usually tall casements made of wood or metal, although double-hung sash windows are also used. It is common, especially in major rooms, to have three or more windows together to form a large expanse of window. This sometimes is turned into a bay window or a smaller oriel window. Windows are recessed at the wall plane with stucco return with no trim.

Dormers: Dormers mimic the steeply pitched gables of the main roof form.

Chimneys: Large, often expressive chimneys are a key part of the Tutor style. Made of brick that sometimes has decorative patterns, stone, plaster, or a combination of these materials, the Tudor chimneys usually house several flues, which are then expressed in chimney pots or other decorative flue treatments.

Wall Materials: The English Vernacular and Tudor styles have a large range of building materials. In Santa Barbara wall materials are usually in stucco often with decorative half-timbering that imitates the half-timbering of English Medieval houses. Similar to the half-timbering look of Medieval construction, the infill of the half-timbering is typically brick or plaster. Half-timbering with infill is often found in the second floor and sometimes used to decorate main gables of the structure.





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