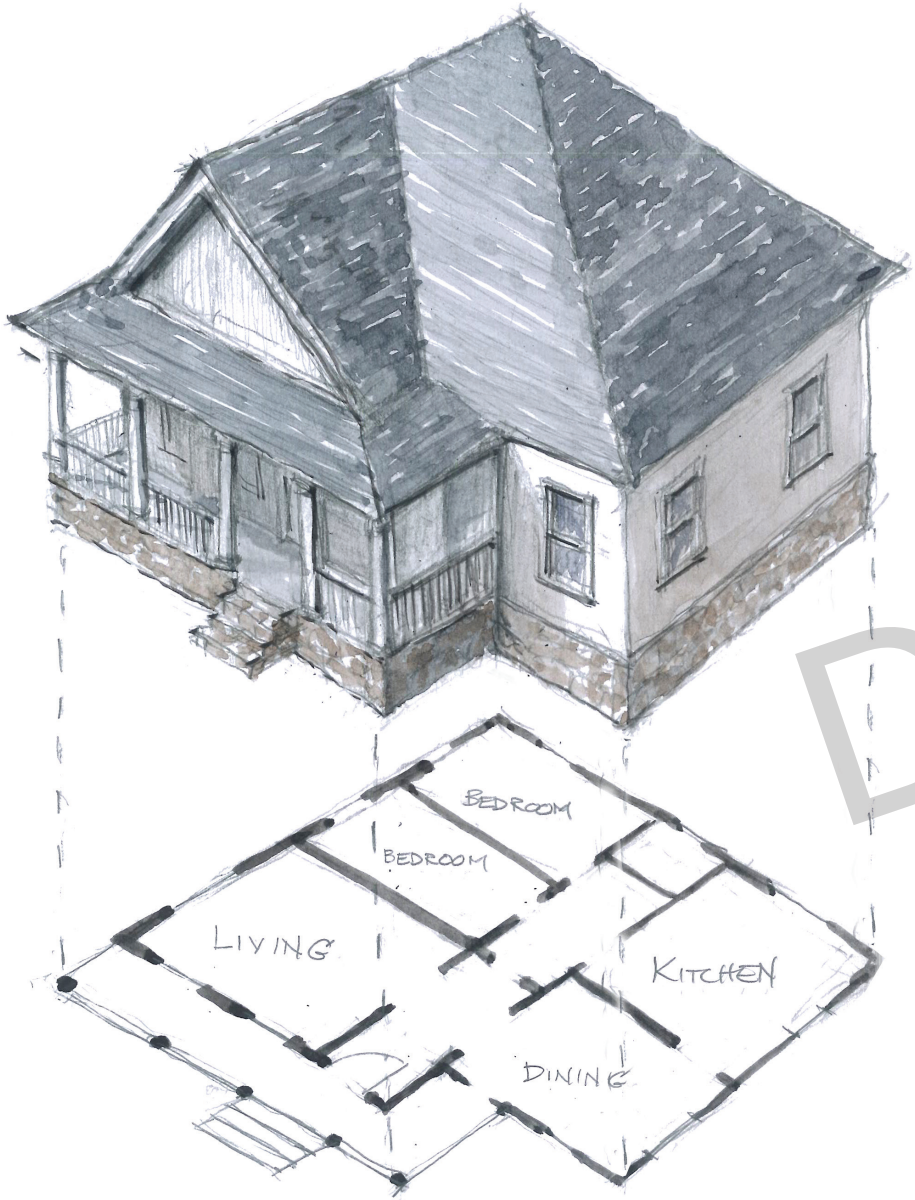
Queen Anne Free Classic

Historic Resources • Santa Barbara, California



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Introduction

The Queen Anne Free Classic shares certain characteristics with its relative the Queen Anne style, while still containing many distinct and important features that place it in a class all of its own. It became a dominant style in Santa Barbara at the turn of the century, when much of the city was being developed.

The Queen Anne Free Classic on the Upper East Side neighborhood features classical porch posts, intricate divided window panes in the tops sashes and an intricately carved door panel.

The Queen Anne Free Classic in the Brinkerhoff Landmark District has simple lines at the cornice and simple brackets under the wide overhanging eaves.

HISTORY

As part of the Victorian period, Queen Anne Free Classic was popular from the late 1800's to the early 1900's, with its peak from 1900 to 1910. In 1900, the highly decorative Queen Anne was steadily declining in popularity, while the Free Classic became the only Victorian style to grow in popularity. In Santa Barbara, it tended to come stylistically close to the early stages of American Colonial Revival, while still retaining Queen Anne characteristics such as asymmetrical plans, variously shaped shingles, and decorative bracket details. Although sometimes difficult to distinguish from American Colonial Revival because of similarities in moldings, siding, columns, etc., Queen Anne Free Classic is a distinct and important part of Santa Barbara's history and streetscape character.

The Queen Anne Free Classic was popular during a period of great growth in Santa Barbara and examples can be found throughout the historic neighborhoods surrounding downtown, including the Brinkerhoff Avenue Landmark District and Lower De La Vina Historic District.

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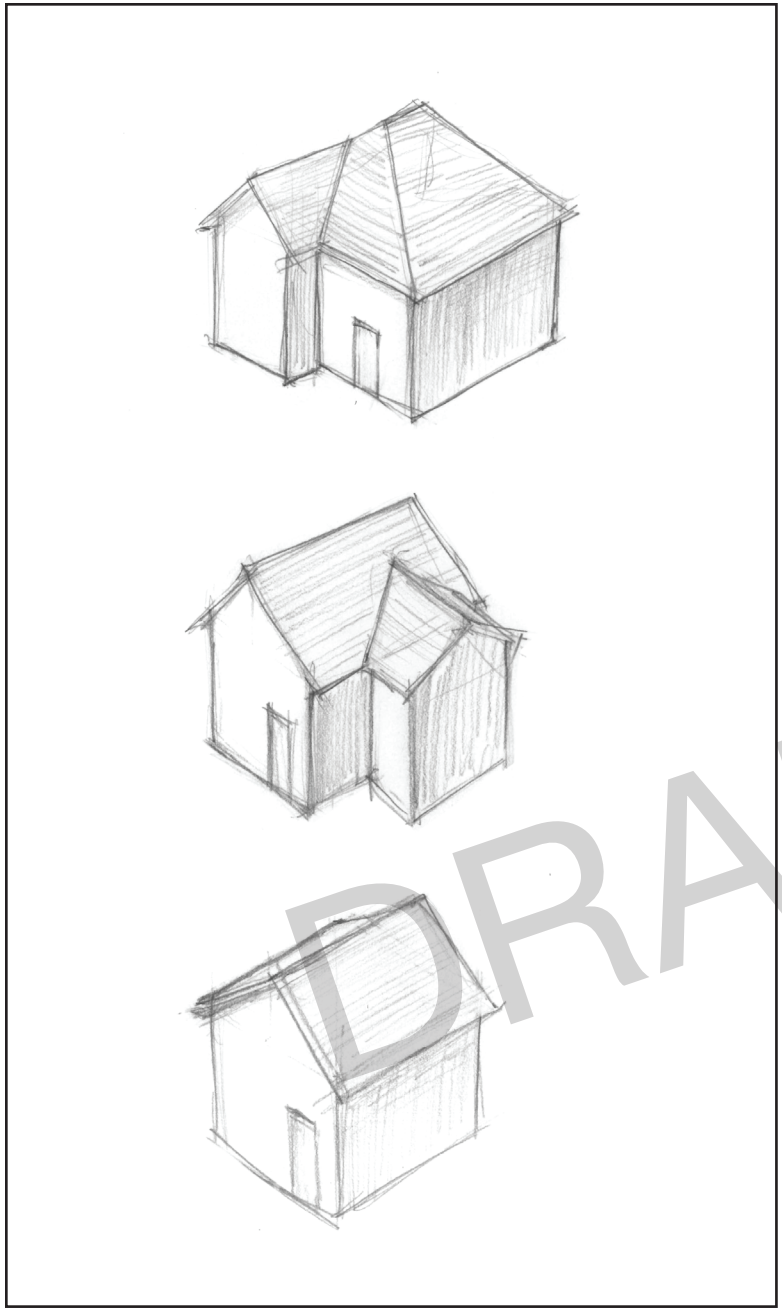

MASSING & OVERALL FORM

There are three principal massing types for the Queen Anne Free Classic. The first is the hipped roof, with a lower cross gable (or gables). This sub-type usually has a large massing of hipped roof (pyramid or elongated pyramid in shape) with a projecting front facing gable. The next type of massing is the cross-gabled roof, where the body of the structure is made of large intersecting gables. The final type is the front-gabled type, which is made of one large front facing gable. Smaller gables and dormers may off-shoot to one side or another, but the main body of the house is comprised of a single gable.

Across the county, the roof pitch of the typical Queen Anne Free Classic tends to be fairly steep. In Santa Barbara, however, the pitch of many Free Classics is quite low. This is partially due to climate, as well as the transitional period in which it was popular, coincided with the time that Craftsman and other lower-pitched roofs were being used.

CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Gable, Cornice and Eave Details: Wide overhanging eaves are adorned with brackets, which are typically flatter and with less ornament than those of a Queen Anne. The lines on the gable ends and along the cornices are very elegant and streamlined rather than the intricate spindle work or gingerbread featured in the Queen Anne.

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Porch Columns: The strongest defining features of the Queen Anne Free Classic are the porch posts. Rather than the turned spindles of the Queen Anne, the Free Classic has classical columns for porch supports. Across the country, these columns often ranged from simpler Tuscan columns, to high-styled Corinthian which featured leaves at the capital. Santa Barbara favored the simpler Tuscan Style, but there are examples of a variety of styles throughout the city. Columns are sometimes full height and sometimes only partial height, sitting on a low wall or pedestal the height of the porch railing. Columns can be individually spaced, but are often paired, especially when there is a large, open span in the porch. Railings and other details are usually simple, and often lack the complex and delicate detailing of the Queen Anne houses.

Doors: The front doors demonstrate a single window pane over an intricately carved wood panel.

Windows: The Queen Anne Free Classics of Santa Barbara often have intricate, multi-light upper sash with ogee lugs over a single pane lower sash wood windows. The Queen Anne Free Classics features bay windows and drew from classical details of the Palladian window by employing triple set of windows.

Dormers: Dormers echo the simple lines of the open front gables and would have decorative shingles and a window.

Wall Materials: Queen Anne Free Classic walls are often narrow wood weatherboards. The upper stories and open gables often have decorative shingles.

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