



Revival VERNACULAR

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Classical *Renovations*

Many of the lots in Atlanta's older neighborhoods were just being cleared one hundred years ago, but the motivation to enlarge or change existing houses was very similar to what it is today. Homeowners needed additional space for growing families, or they were financially able to add features or improve the architectural quality.

Many of Atlanta's classical architects also did outstanding "alterations and additions" during their careers. Although little attention has been given to renovation projects, some of these projects are true masterpieces and deserve more consideration. Successful renovations provide wonderful insight for today's projects.

These projects can be loosely grouped into two areas: modest or elaborate. If the scope of the project was relatively modest such as a simple library or bedroom addition, the architects would strive to make the addition as seamless as possible and would match details exactly, often salvaging and reusing windows, doors, and other materials. When the client's budget and fancy allowed, the designs became increasingly sophisticated and bold.

All of these projects emphasized quality over quantity. The point of these renovations was not to double the house but to improve them. Additions were typically the secondary motivation. The quality of the renovations was at a minimum equal to the original house but typically much greater.

While these additions were not always the same style as the original house, they were rarely obviously different and frequently the changes were not immediately apparent. These subtle differences were achieved by using the same materials but in different ways.

These additions were not simplistic duplications but sophisticated improvisations based on a thorough grounding in the historical styles.

Often the interiors did not match the exteriors, but that was relatively common even in new construction. For example few Tudor Revival houses in Atlanta actually had Tudor interiors. The interiors of the day were usually much more consistent than the exteriors which ranged between numerous styles. While relatively consistent, the interiors were not particularly true to one style or period but were more likely to be driven by the materials that were readily available and by what the builder was familiar using. Even well respected architects typically repeated many of the same trim details regardless of the exterior style of the house.

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Many early renovations focused on interior improvements, taking a basic interior and creating a much more high style, “period” design. Revival is currently working on a great Ivey & Crook design in Druid Hills and is focused on that firm’s work. There are two interesting Ivey & Crook examples that illustrate these points.

The addition for H. W. Barnes in 1929 is an example of a conservative addition that matches the details of the previous house, creating a feeling as if it was always part of the house. Part of this feel be credited to the reuse of existing materials; a significant Palladian window was separated and installed in separate pieces in the new addition.

The Andrews-Dunn house is an outstanding example of a more elaborate renovation. The original house was likely built in 1910 for Walter Andrews and is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, house in the Peachtree Heights area. The house was sold to Dr. and Mrs. William Dunn in 1928 who commissioned Ivey & Crook to enlarge the house. This house originally fronted Peachtree, but the property was subdivided and left with frontage only along Andrews Drive. It is now part of the St. Philips campus.

This very eclectic home has an English Arts and Crafts feel and was originally a “plus” shaped plan consisting of only five main rooms. Ivey and Crook’s addition was an “L” shape that was attached to the Andrews Drive side of the house at a forty-five degree angle. This not only enlarged the house but also reoriented it.

The architects emphasized the gabled roof form rather than the hip. While the roof material was consistent, the gable and entry became the focus rather than the roofing material. The raised granite foundation created a grand approach to what could have been simply a basement. The half-timbering remains a primary decorative element, but the architects “played” with the pattern. There is a great continuity to the design, but it definitely changes as you make your way around the house.



Original Gable of Andrews-Dunn House



New Gable of Andrews-Dunn House

A Recent *Revival Project*



Library



Family Room



Rear Addition and Terrace

Most great renovations are not obvious to the casual observer. The more sophisticated the renovation, the more investigation is required to understand the true scope of the changes.

The renovations can be very significant, even dramatic, but there is a harmony between the new and the old that so many bad renovations lack. Successful renovations typically feel as if the house naturally evolved over time.

We can learn what an earlier architect may have done or what may be appropriate to do now only through studying an architect's work and analyzing how he handled similar problems. Many designed a variety of houses within the same style. Frequently, a larger house in a specific style will give clues as how to enlarge a smaller house of that same style.

The trite phrase that "you have to know the rules to break them" applies to renovation. Simple repetition is often a disappointing choice, and there is a definite argument shown by these projects that there is no reason to be too conservative if you are in the hands of a great architect and builder.

Coca-Cola Architects: *Designing for the Candler's*

Revival is currently renovating an Ivey & Crook house in Druid Hills that was built for John H. Candler, one of Asa Griggs Candler's five children. All five of Candler's children built houses in Druid Hills between 1917 and 1929; however, four different architects were used. Only Ivey and Crook was hired for two houses.

The first person to correctly email wright@revivalconstruction.com with the correct names of the other three architects and the houses they designed will win one full day of carpentry or painting this fall. **Good luck!**

Vernacular Term

Shutters

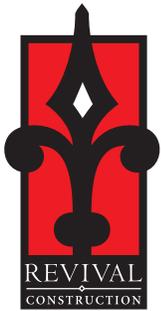
Why bring up shutters?

Shutters are everywhere, but they are some of the most abused of all architectural devices. How could anyone think screwing an undersized, plastic shutter to the front of a house is a good idea? Unfortunately, there is a vocabulary and history to shutters that are unfamiliar to most.

Historically, shutters were used for security, privacy, and insulation and were not just architectural ornaments.

It was common to see “cut-out” designs in the upper panels. These cut out designs were frequently pine trees, crescent moons, fleur-de-lis, or small animals. The Randolph-Lucas house on Peachtree Road is a wonderful example of the fleur-de-lis “cut-outs.”

By the early 20th century, storm windows and screens had replaced most of the shutter’s usefulness, and they became almost exclusively decorative. Shutters began to be kept in the open position, and “shutter dogs” were metal attachments created to hold the shutter in place. The “S” scroll type shutter dog is the most common, but there are many other designs including the “rat tail.”



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