

## ARCHITECTURE IN CLOSTER



*The J. M. Serviss House was erected in 1860 to the designs of local architect John Henry Stephens. The picturesque building is eclectic, displaying features of a number of styles. Its porch has lost some of its decorative elements.*

### UNDERSTANDING A BUILDING

This section is designed to help residents and their architects and contractors understand the architecture of their buildings and the architectural history of their community and to provide references to sources of additional information. Before undertaking a rehabilitation project of a historic building or new construction within a historic context, it is important to understand the architecture of the building and its setting. What are the visual characteristics that associate a building with a specific **architectural form\***, **type\***, or **architectural style\***? What features are original to its initial construction? Which features are later modifications, but also worthy of preservation

because they contribute to the historic visual character of the building? Which features are incompatible alterations whose removal or modification will enhance the building's visual appearance and/or prolong the life of original materials?

Answering these questions and defining a building's form and style require an investigative approach. Many buildings are examples of **vernacular architecture\***, common or everyday buildings that were built according to traditional designs and methods, usually without the direction of an architect. They have relatively little applied decoration and are characterized more by their form – their size, shape, and materials - than by sophisticated architectural design. They reflect local building preferences and practices. Closter's

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\* Words and phrases followed by \* are defined in "Definitions and Abbreviations" in the *Appendix*.

earliest buildings were not designed by architects but by local builders who continued to use tested construction practices, while gradually incorporating newer architectural design features.

Beginning in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, architectural designs for homes became widely available through pattern books and agricultural and ladies magazines. Also, local architects, such as John Henry Stevens in Closter, began to practice in the new suburban communities. Homeowners began to choose among a number of architectural styles popular throughout the eastern United States. This trend to erect popular building styles continues to the present.

Complicating the visual investigation is the fact that the exteriors of older buildings are frequently the product of change and enlargement over time so that they have features from several architectural time periods. Others were erected by builders and architects who mixed features from various styles. Closter's individually designated [Landmarks\\*](#) and [Key Contributing Buildings\\*](#) in [Landmark Districts\\*](#) may be outstanding examples of an architectural type, form, or style. However, most of the community's historic buildings, particularly [Contributing Buildings\\*](#) in [Landmark Districts\\*](#) and properties included in the Historic Preservation Element of the Closter Master Plan, are typical examples of local architectural forms and styles or they have features from several styles and types. They are the houses, stores, churches, and other structures used by ordinary Closter residents. They collectively are Closter's heritage, linking today to the continuum of history since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Fortunately, the National Park Service has produced *Walk through Historic Buildings*, an online tutorial, and other publications on how to analyze a historic building's visual aspects which are included in *Resources for Understanding Closter's Architecture* at the end of this chapter.

In addition to carefully looking at the building and studying its features to determine what are the significant visual elements, it is helpful to know its history and what architectural historians consider to be its important characteristics. Closter's residents and property owners are fortunate to have a number of excellent resources about the Borough's architecture which are included in the *Resources* list. These and the many

publications on American architecture can serve as a starting point for further study. These resources and many others on Closter's history and architecture are available at the Closter Public Library.

Property owners are encouraged to document the history and architecture of their buildings. A systematic framework for how to do this is found in the guidelines for preparing historic structure reports and preservation plans. A historic structure report provides documentary, graphic, and physical information about a property's history and existing condition. A historic structure report also addresses the use or re-use of the property. It provides the basis for selecting the best approach to physical treatments prior to commencing rehabilitation or restoration work and outlines a recommended scope of work. The report serves as an important guide for changes to be made to a historic property. It can also provide information for maintenance procedures. A preservation plan is a similar but less comprehensive document with analyses focused on a particular rehabilitation project, rather than the entire property. A cultural landscape study includes intensive study of the landscaping and setting of a historic property. While these research reports are usually prepared for museum properties and major buildings, similar, if less detailed, investigations would benefit the rehabilitation of any historic property.

## RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING CLOSTER'S ARCHITECTURE

### For Closter Architecture

Bergen County Office of Cultural and Historic Affairs, *Bergen County Historic Sites Survey, Borough of Closter*, 1981-82, updated in March 1999 by the Closter Historic Preservation Commission. Based on the survey work of Frances Niederer and a large number of volunteers and later of Pat Garbe Morillo, this historic resources inventory provides information on many of the Borough's historic buildings and districts, along with a developmental history of the Borough.

Bergen County Office of Cultural and Historic Affairs, Office of Albin Rothe, *The Early Stone Houses of Bergen County*, 1979. A report prepared by the Office of Albin Rothe with survey forms prepared by Claire K. Tholl. This inventory contains considerable information on an important early building type, including survey forms for ten early stone houses in Closter. Available for consultation at the office of the Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs, Bergen County Department of Parks.

Bastable, Joan T., edited by Jeanne Gurnee, *Historic Homes of Closter*, Closter, NJ: Closter Environmental Commission, 1979

Brown, T. Robins and Schuyler Warmflash, *The Architecture of Bergen County, New Jersey*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001. Places the Borough's architecture in the larger context of Bergen County.

Closter Historic Preservation Commission, "*Dutch*" *Sandstone Houses, Colonial Period Frame Architecture, Harold Hess Lustron House, The Durie Avenue/Knickerbocker Road Historic District* (prepared by Zakalak Associates), and *The Closter Historic District* (prepared by McCabe & Associates, Inc., September 2004). Historical data, descriptions, and photographs of historic properties and districts considered for designation.

Closter Historical Society, *Closter Historic District "Hub of the Northern Valley" Walking Tour*, <http://www.closterboro.com/history/starttour.shtml>

Garbe-Morillo, Patricia, *Closter and Alpine: Images of America*, Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2001. Splendid early photographs of the Borough's architecture and other fascinating information.

Historic American Buildings Survey, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs/haer/>. Contains measured drawings for several buildings in Closter.

New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places listings for Properties in Closter,  
Thematic Nomination of Early Stone Houses of Bergen County

Abram Demaree House [also included in the thematic nomination above]

Hess, Harold, Lustron House, Lustrons in New Jersey Multiple Property Submission

Nomination forms are available at the Closter Public Library and the offices of the Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs and the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office.

Ranzetta, Kirk Edward, "The Paradoxical "Jersey Dutch" of Closter, New Jersey: Revolution, Schism, and Architectural Unity," unpublished thesis submitted to the University of Delaware, 1996. Study of Closter's earliest dwellings.

### Historic Structures Reports and Preservation Plans

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 43: The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief43.htm>

New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, *Historic Structures Reports and Preservation Plans*, [http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/4sustain/prepare\\_hsr.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/4sustain/prepare_hsr.pdf)

### For Visual Investigation

National Park Service, *Walk through Historic Buildings: Learn to Identify the Visual Character of a Historic Building*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/walkthrough/index.htm>

### **For Visual Investigation Continued**

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 17: Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*,  
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief17.htm>

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 35: Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation*,  
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief35.htm>

### **For Researching a Building**

New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, *How to Research the History of a House*,  
[http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/4sustain/houserese\\_arch.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/4sustain/houserese_arch.pdf)

National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: Researching a Historic Property*,  
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb39/>

Howe, Barbara J., Dolores A. Fleming, Emory L. Kemp, and Ruth Ann Overbeck, *Houses and Homes: Exploring Their History*, Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1987

### **Selected Resources on New Jersey and American Architectural History:**

Baker, John, *American House Styles*, New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1994

Blumenson, John, *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*, Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1977

Cohen, David Steven, *The Dutch-American Farm*, New York, NY: New York University Press, 1992

Gowans, Alan, *Architecture in New Jersey*, Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1964

Gowans, Alan, *The Comfortable House, North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930*, Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1986

Guter, Robert P. and Janet W. Foster, *Building by the Book: Pattern-Book Architecture in New Jersey*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992

Hand, Susanne C., *New Jersey Architecture*, Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1995

Longstreth, Richard, *The Buildings of Main Street*, Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2000

McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984

Meeske, Harrison, *The Hudson Valley Dutch and Their Houses*, Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2001

Morgan, William, *The Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Poppeliers, John, et al, *What Style Is It?: A Guide to American Architecture*, New York, NY: John Wiley, 2003

Rifkind, Carole, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, New York, NY: New American Library, 1980

Stevens, John R., *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America, 1640-1830*, West Hurley, NY: Society for the Preservation of Hudson Valley Architecture, 2004

Whiffen, Marcus, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1969

## ARCHITECTURAL STYLES, TYPES, AND FORMS IN CLOSTER

Few buildings in Closter have all or even a preponderance of the features associated with a particular style, type, or form. Some buildings have been modified over time so that they now have elements with architectural significance that are associated with several time periods. Others are eclectic designs where stylistic features were mixed when the building was constructed. Most typically, Closter's buildings are vernacular designs which never had very much applied decoration.

This introduction does not include every style, type, or form found in Closter's historic architecture. Instead, it covers the most common historic architectural styles, types, and forms in the community. The Stick Style and the Renaissance Revival were not widely employed in Closter, but they are included here because they were employed for important buildings in the community. The characteristics listed are those typical of Closter's architecture and do not always reflect the most typical characteristics of the architectural style, form, or type elsewhere.



**STYLE:** A specific type of architecture distinguished by special characteristics of structure and ornamentation usually built in the same time period; have a general quality of distinctive character and an intent to be fashionable.

**FORM:** The shape of the building.

**TYPE:** A grouping of individual historic properties based on a set of shared physical or associative characteristics. Physical characteristics may relate to geography, cultural affiliation, building materials, age, structural forms, architectural styles, use, and/or site type. Associative characteristics may relate to the nature of the associated events or activities, to associations with specific individuals or group, or to the category of information about which a property may yield information.

## EARLY STONE HOUSES, 18<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES



- Gambrel roof with shed dormers
- Gable roof on wing
- Flared eaves, sweeping overhang
- Lintel
- 6/6 double-hung window

*The Daniel De Clark House has a 5-bay, 1½-story stone main section, built circa 1785, with a 3-bay, frame side kitchen wing with a stone end, which was likely built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The shed dormers, front door with cast-iron grills, and shutters are later modifications.*

### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TYPE

*1½ story with 1-story stone walls of local rosy-brown sandstone laid in soft lime mortar; the front and the side facing the road may have better cut, dressed, and laid stone*

*Early expansion by side additions; wings have lesser height; frame wings may have stone end walls*

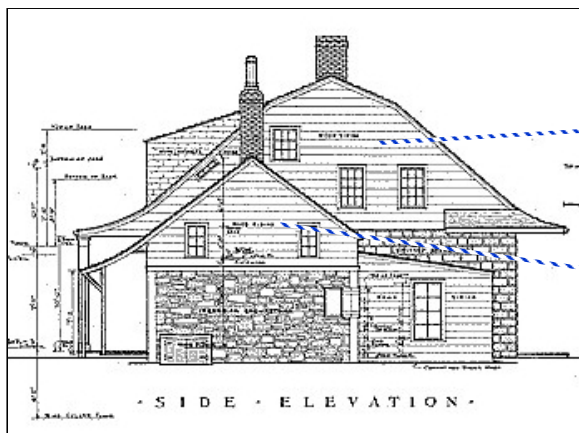
*Stone section has 3, 4, or 5 bays*

*Gambrel or gable roof, usually with sweeping overhang with graceful flare; roofs were originally wood shingled*

*Double-hung, multi-paned sash window which may, or may not, have lintels; wood paneled shutters*

*Dutch split-leaf or wood paneled doors; doors may have transoms or fanlights*

*May retain historic accessory buildings*



*Clapboards on the gambrel end above coursed sandstone*

*Clapboards on the gable end above uncoursed rubble sandstone*

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,  
Historic American Buildings Survey, NJ-364

*When this drawing was made of the De Clark House in 1937, it had front porches, which are now gone.*

## EARLY STONE HOUSES

Closter has ten stone houses that are examples of an important early regional house type associated with areas first settled by the Dutch. These buildings reflect an amalgam of cultural influences. Their sturdy walls of local stone strongly connect them to their locations. The houses are typically 1½ story, 3 to 5 bays wide, and either one or two rooms deep. The front usually faces south to get the sun and frequently has finer stonework. One house has a brick front.

With a graceful curving outline, the gambrel or gable roofs typically extend over the eaves, sometimes over a full-length porch. Some of Closter's early stone houses have early gable-roofed side wings, with walls that are stone, frame, or a mix of stone and frame.

Early frame houses have similar features, except wood clapboard siding originally covered the timber-framed walls.

*Splayed lintel* .....

*Brick front with sandstone corner quoins* .....



.....*Fanlight*

*The Durie Ternure House was built around 1800 and has Federal Period decorative features such as splayed lintels and a semi-circular fanlight. It is unique among Closter's early stone house as its front*



*The Abram and David Demaree House displays finely cut stonework with tooled surfaces.*

## GREEK REVIVAL, 1820-1860



Gable roof with end chimneys

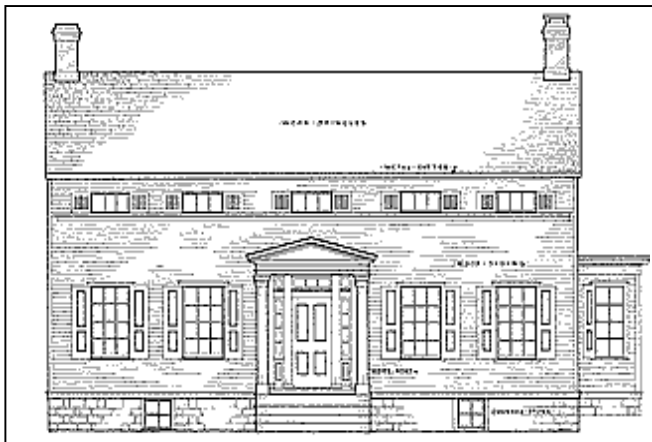
Prominent returns on gable end

Knee-wall windows in frieze

Full length porch with posts

Doorway with transom and sidelights

The Mathew S. Bogert House (above), built in 1852, and the David D. Doremus House (below), built in the 1840's, typify the Greek Revival style in Closter with symmetrical 5-bay compositions, upper knee-wall windows, and simplified classical detailing.



Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, NJ-361

### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

1½ or 2 story; rectangular plan

Main block usually 5 bays; front usually faces the road; early wings at rear

Frame with narrow clapboards; sandstone foundations

Gable roof of low or medium pitch; interior end chimneys with brick caps

Usually have broad frieze with 3 or 6 pane knee-wall windows

Double-hung 6/6 sash windows

Paneled entrance doors.

Simplified angular classical detailing; square posts and pilasters

The Greek Revival style was widely used throughout the United States in the 1820-60 period. Architecture of the style ranged from buildings that closely resembled Greek temples with very elaborate columned porticos to simple 3-bay, 1½-story cottages with broad friezes. Bergen County has no extant elaborate Greek Revival buildings and probably never had many. Several of the Closter's Greek Revival houses, although not

exceptionally large or elaborate, are among the most imposing Greek Revival buildings remaining in the County. They are largely of a single type: the 5-bay frame house with 2<sup>nd</sup>-story knee-wall windows in a broad frieze. Some retain a 1-story front porch, which either extends across the front or is a 1-bay projection at the central entrance. These porches have square posts and pilasters.



## VERNACULAR GOTHIC REVIVAL, 1850-1880



### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

*1½- 2½ stories*

*Rectangular, L-shaped, irregular plans; often have 3-bay section with gable facing street*

*Frame, originally covered with wooden clapboards or vertical board-and-batten siding; sandstone, gray diabase, or brick foundations*

*Gable and cross gable roofs; gable dormers; overhanging eaves with braces or decorative trim along eaves or in the gable peak (jigsaw boards with cutout designs, bargeboards); brick interior chimneys*

*2/2 or 6/6 double-hung window sash; regularly spaced; may have paired or grouped windows; windows in gable peak may be round, rectangular, or have pointed arches; projecting bay windows; lowered shutters*

*Single or double paneled entrance doors, sometimes with glass upper panels, may have sidelights and/or transoms*

*Windows and doors have trim with heavy moldings; sometimes cornices or hoods*

*Open porches, full width or wraparound; square or polygonal wooden piers with moldings below side brackets or arched spandrels; may have jigsaw, decorative porch railings*

Closter's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century architecture followed national trends, adopting architectural styles favored for suburban and country houses. The community has a number of suburban cottages and modest houses which are vernacular Gothic Revival. They have fanciful, large chimneys in the gable peak. They typically are characterized more by restrained use of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century features and forms rather than by having consistent attributes of the Gothic Revival style. Houses in Closter do not often display the very steeply pitched roofs, the pointed-arched windows, the asymmetrical massing, and the medieval-inspired decorative ornamentation associated with high style Gothic Revival architecture.

ITALIANATE, 1850-1880

Low-pitched gable roof  
 Round-arched window and shutters  
 Overhanging bracketed eaves  
 Wraparound porch



Paired porch cornice brackets  
 Cutout porch side bracket  
 Moldings below brackets



Broad frieze with brackets  
 2/2 sash  
 Arched spandrel  
 Double doors, later storm door

LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

2-2½ story

Rectangular, L-shaped, T-shaped plans, larger examples have towers

Cubic or blocky massing, often have a front gable; varied number of bays

Typically frame, originally covered with wooden clapboards; brick or stone foundations

Low-pitched gable, cross gable, hip, flat roofs, overhanging eaves with brackets and broad frieze; brick interior chimneys

Windows are regularly spaced, 2/2 or 6/6 double-hung sash; might have round or elliptically arched tops or paired windows; windows in gable peak are often round or round arched; projecting bay windows; louvered shutters

Single or double paneled entrance doors, sometimes with glazed upper panels; may have sidelights and/or a transom

Windows and doors have trim with heavy moldings; sometimes cornices or hoods

Open porches, full width or wraparound; square or polygonal wooden posts with moldings below side brackets or arched spandrels

Italianate architecture has expansive porches, bay windows, and other features typical of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century architecture. The style is distinguished by the use of broad overhanging eaves with brackets or classical cornices, low-pitched roofs, blocky massing, and the use of round or elliptical arches. While Italian Renaissance

farmhouses are the distant sources for the style, sources for Closter's Italianate houses were likely the designs for "a villa in the Italian style" and other suburban houses in the popular 19<sup>th</sup>-century architectural pattern books and ladies and agricultural magazines.



**LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE**

*1½-2½ stories*

*Rectangular, L-shaped plans; 2-3 bays*

*Frame, originally covered with wood clapboards; brick or gray diabase foundations*

*Mansard roofs, straight or concave profile; originally patterned gray slates with colored slate accents; may have tower; overhanging eaves with bracketed cornices with wide friezes; dormers with gable or arched roofs with heavy cornices; cast-iron cresting; brick interior chimneys*

*Typically regularly spaced 2/2 or 6/6 double-hung window sash; may have paired or grouped windows and tall 1<sup>st</sup>-story windows; projecting bay windows; lowered shutters*

*Single or double paneled entrance doors, sometimes with glass upper panels; may have a transom*

*Windows and doors have trim with heavy moldings; sometimes cornices or hoods*

*Open porches, full width or wrap around; square or polygonal wooden posts with moldings below side brackets or arched spandrels*



*The imposing bulk of many Second Empire houses is revealed in this photograph taken in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of houses along Harrington Avenue.*

*Cast-iron cresting*

*Tower with straight sided mansard roof and dormers*

*Overhanging bracketed eaves*

*Polychromatic patterned slates*

*Arched dormer*

*2/2 sash*

*Full-width open porch*

*Bay window*



The Second Empire was arguably American's favorite architectural style in the decade after the Civil War. Originating in France, this style was popularized by illustrations in books and articles and its employment for highly visible public buildings and resort hotels. Many features of the style are similar to those of the Italianate style. However, the Second Empire is distinguished by the use of the mansard roof, a dual pitched roof

with steep lower slope and almost flat upper section. This roof form had functional benefits as it allowed the attic floor to be fully useable.

Closter's railroad suburb has considerable number of Second Empire buildings. They range from small 2-bay, 1½-story cottages to substantial suburban homes (some with towers and elaborate detailing). Even a large commercial block displays a mansard roof.

## STICK STYLE, 1860- 1890



*This late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph shows the Stick Style Closter railroad station of 1875 before it was moved and converted into a residence. Note the applied vertical boards suggesting framing, the heavy decorative trusses in the gable, and the braced overhanging roof.*



*The station building's original braces and overhanging roof remain.*

The Stick Style was favored for railroad stations in Bergen County in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. One notable example of this style is the Closter Northern Railroad Station erected around 1875. This building has the style's characteristic applied stickwork suggesting exposed framing, broad overhanging eaves with decorative bracing, and exposed trusses in the apexes of gables.

The Stick Style with its elaborate applied ornamentation is among the popular styles for suburban houses particular in the decades immediately following the Civil War. While none of Closter's historic houses today exhibit all the characteristic features of the style, several have Stick Style features such as the heavy exposed trusses in their gables.

### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

*1 -2½ stories*

*Various plans may have asymmetrical silhouette*

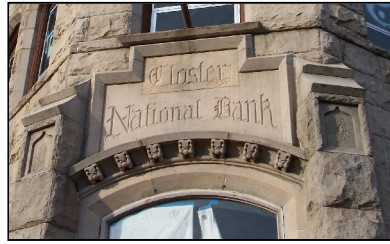
*Frame, applied "stickwork" (flat boards applied in geometric patterns that suggests framing and divide the walls into panels); sometimes have applied diagonal "X"s; the walls between the "sticks" may be clapboard, board-and-batten vertical siding, shingle, or stucco; foundations are sandstone, gray diabase, or brick*

*Gable roofs, often with cross gables; sometimes gable dormers or towers; heavy trusses with chamfered edges at the apexes of gables; overhanging eaves with large brackets or exposed heavy roof rafter ends; brick interior chimneys*

*Regularly spaced 2/2 or 6/6 double-hung window sash*

*Houses have open porches, full width or wrap around; square or polygonal wooden piers with braces, porch railings may have stickwork patterns or may have turned posts and spindle railing and friezes*

## RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE, 1880-1910



### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

*Massive*

*Heavily rusticated stone walls*

*Arched openings; grouped windows*

*Restrained ornamentation*



*The heavily rusticated sandstone bank building has the massive monumentality characteristic of the Romanesque Revival style. Its corner location, which is emphasized by the angled corner entrance bay, adds to its prominence in Closter's historic downtown.*

Closter has only one example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, but it is an excellent one. The Closter National Bank building was erected in 1913, long after the peak popularity of the Richardson Romanesque style in the 1880's and 90's. The building displays the style's massive, rough textured masonry walls, and restrained

medieval-inspired ornamentation. Like other examples of the style, its architecture communicates durability and stability. The style was stimulated by the work of famed Boston architect H. H. Richardson (1838-1886). Richardson took his inspiration from European Romanesque structures.

## QUEEN ANNE, 1880-1910

### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

*2½ stories*

*Rectangular, L-shaped, T-shaped, irregular plans; asymmetrical silhouette; may have a tower or 3-bay section with gable facing the street*

*Typically frame, clad with a mix of materials with different stories covered in a different material (clapboards, decorative shingles of different patterns, decorative siding); corner boards; frieze boards between stories; typically decorative shingles on exterior wall of attic; gray diabase or brick foundations*

*Gable, hip, cross gable roofs; dormer, towers, and turrets with conical roofs and finials; overhanging eaves without brackets; brick chimneys*

*2/2 or 1/1 double-hung window sash; some windows may have borders of small square panes; paired or grouped windows; cantilevered projecting bay windows; louvered shutters*

*Single or double, paneled entrance doors, sometimes with glass upper panels with borders of small square panes; may have transom*

*Windows and doors have trim with heavy moldings; sometimes cornices or hoods*

*Open porches, full width or wraparound; turned posts, elaborate porch railings with spindle or elliptical spandrels, spindle work or lattice frieze, and/or ¼-circle spindle brackets between posts*

*Gable peak may have stickwork or spindle ornamentation*



*This Queen Anne has decorative shingles on the attic wall, an attic window with a border of small square panes, overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends, and stickwork in the peak of the gable.*



*Elliptical spandrel*

*Turned post*

*Elaborate porch railing*



*Polygonal tower*

*Frieze board*

*Wraparound porch*

QUEEN ANNE STYLE



*When the photograph above was taken in the winter of 2006, the late-19<sup>th</sup>-century house was being rehabilitated and painted with a multicolor paint scheme of the type originally used for Queen Anne architecture. The spindle porch frieze was temporarily covered. The photograph of the same house, at the left, was probably taken in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as the light paint scheme reflects changing tastes from the initial construction of the house.*

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, homeowners had access to inexpensive pattern books featuring numerous designs. These, the new framing techniques that permitted irregular massing, and the greater availability of ornate manufactured building components gave the home builder many accessible choices for making even a modest house highly decorative. The frequent stylistic choice was the Queen Anne which is characterized by a profusion of ornamental features and surface variety. Porches often have turned posts and may have turned railings and friezes. Flat walls are broken up by

bays, towers, and overhangs and by using several materials. Unfortunately, many of Closter's examples no longer display original exterior claddings, but notable examples remain.

Usually, the Queen Anne house is a bit taller than earlier houses. Originally the frequent use of different exterior claddings for each story, or accent boards between stories, provided balancing horizontality. Decorative features are somewhat smaller scale and more intricate than on mid-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

RENAISSANCE REVIVAL, 1890-1930

*Low hip roof*

*Classical cornice*

*Corner quoins*

*Projecting gable-roofed pavilion*



*The Village School was initially constructed in 1899-1900 and subsequently received a number of additions. The 1907 addition, shown at the left, and the 1912 addition, built after this photograph was taken, continue the original Renaissance Revival style.*

LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

*2 -3 stories*

*Rectangular plan; symmetrical, may have central focus; clear horizontal and vertical organization of facades; may have pavilions*

*Masonry*

*Low roofline; hip, gable, or roof hidden by parapet*

*Doorways may have an elaborate enframing*

*Classical ornamentation such as modillions, semi-circular window in gable, and corner quoins*

*Parapet hiding low-pitched roof*

*Enframed window wall*

*Beltcourse*



*The terra-cotta faced building in a photograph of about 1928.*

The Renaissance Revival style was popular for substantial public and commercial buildings at the turn of the century and in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Loosely based on Italian palaces, it is characterized by order and regularity. The style was

rarely used in Closter, but the stone and brick Village School building is a fine example. A handsome terra-cotta faced commercial building also has features of the style.



## COLONIAL REVIVAL, 1876 TO THE PRESENT

### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

*1- 2½ stories*

*Rectangular or square plan; often 3 bays; symmetrical*

*Typically clapboards with corner boards, shingles; sometimes red brick walls; brick, concrete block, stone, or concrete foundations*

*Gable, hip, cross gable roofs; may have dormers; brick interior chimneys*

*Typically regularly spaced, multi-paned, double-hung window sash; may have grouped window or Palladian window; louvered or paneled shutters, may have decorative cutouts*

*Single paneled entrance doors, sometimes with glass upper panels; may have sidelights and/or transom*

*Open columnar porches, 1-bay, full width or wraparound; earlier examples may have porte cocheres; column types various, most are simple Doric but occasionally Ionic or Corinthian; sometime columns are paired; porch railings are usually simple*

*Ornamentation based on Colonial and Federal period buildings; classical cornices, pilasters*



*This elaborate Colonial Revival front wing was added around 1900 to a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century house.*



*Palladian window*

*Pilaster*

*Gable dormer  
Classical cornice*

*Open porch with Doric columns*

The Centennial in 1876 of the birth of our nation was a catalyst for the revival of architectural styles based on early American buildings on the East Coast. The use of the Colonial Revival style has continued uninterrupted to the present. It is the most common architectural style in the United States. A large number of Closter's early-20<sup>th</sup>-century Colonial Revival houses are examples of the Foursquare form or the Bungalow type. Due to its prevalence in Closter, gambrel-roofed Dutch Colonial Revival architecture has its own discussion. Many older buildings received Colonial Revival remodelings, which are evidenced by the community's many columnar porches.

## DUTCH COLONIAL REVIVAL, 1880 TO THE PRESENT



*This house may incorporate an earlier structure, but its exterior style is Dutch Colonial Revival with flaring gambrel roofs on both main section and narrow side wing.*



*Cross gambrel*

*The cross gambrel roof is a dominant visual feature of this Dutch Colonial Revival house.*

Probably due to the presence in the community of handsome gambrel-roofed early houses, the Dutch Colonial Revival was popular in Closter, particularly from about 1880 to 1930. These buildings, which share the materials and decorative features of other Colonial Revival designs, are designated as “Dutch” because they employ the gambrel roof form. This roof form varies considerably within the community. One house has a very high and broad sweeping gambrel roof with two rows of dormers and a

*Applied decoration provides gambrel outline*

*Pent roof*



*This roof, which is structurally a gable, appears to be a gambrel roof.*

full width columnar porch under the extended eaves. Others have cross gambrel roof forms with large gambrel ends facing the street as well as the ends. Some examples have graceful curves, while others have straight profiles. Occasionally, the upper stories immediately under the gambrel project over a porch. Typical examples of the 1920’s are structurally gable-roofed with large shed dormers, but applied elements around the dormers and at the ends suggest the gambrel roof.

### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE

*1 1/2-2 1/2 stories*

*3-5 bays; rectangular; symmetrical*

*Typically frame, clapboards with corner boards, shingle; concrete block, stone, or concrete foundations*

*Gambrel and cross gambrel roof; gambrel may face side or the street; may have gable or shed dormers; later examples actually have gable roofs but appear to have large shed dormers on gambrel roofs, may have a pent roof between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stories*

*Other features similar to those of the Colonial Revival style*

## FOURSQUARE, 1900-1920



*Hipped dormer*

*Pyramidal roof*

*Columnar wraparound porch*

*Entrance with sidelights*

### RESOURCES FOR THE FOURSQUARE

*The American Foursquare 1890-1900s, The Old House Web,*  
<http://www.oldhouseweb.com/stories/Detailed/12269.shtml>

*Architecture 1895-1930: American Foursquare,*  
<http://architecture.about.com/od/periodsstyles/ig/House-Styles/Foursquare.htm>



*This 3-bay-wide Foursquare is unusual in Closter as it is constructed of poured concrete.*

### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FORM

*2-2½ stories*

*2-3 bays; square plan; symmetrical, cubic form*

*Typically frame, originally clad with wood shingles or clapboards; occasionally masonry; brick, rusticated concrete block, cast concrete, or gray diabase foundation*

*Low hipped or pyramidal roof; hipped or gable dormers; overhanging eaves; brick or gray diabase stone interior or exterior chimneys*

*Typically regularly spaced, double-hung 1/1 or multi-paned window sash; may have grouped windows; bay window; decorative windows with leaded glass*

*Single paneled entrance doors; sometimes with glass upper panels; may have sidelights and/or transom*

*Front porch, often full-width or wraparound in Colonial Revival style*

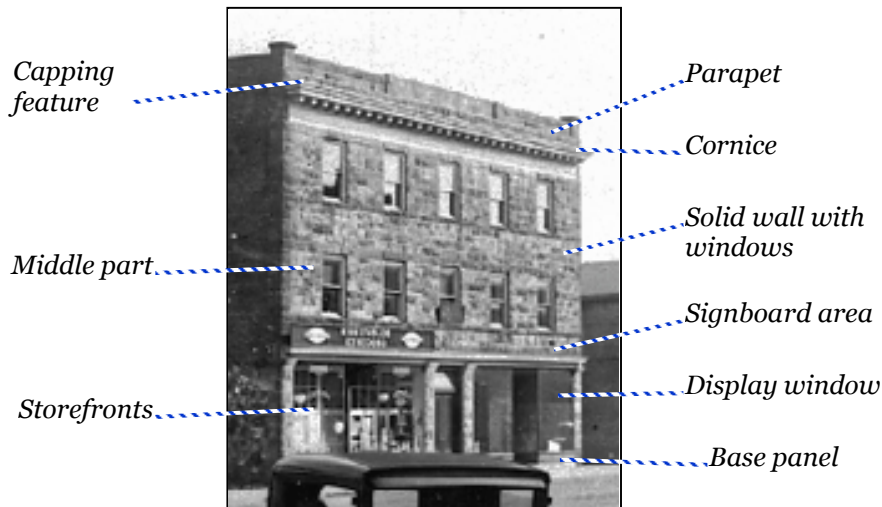
*Usually restrained ornamentation*

*Frequently the property has a free-standing garage at rear*

The Foursquare -- also known as the box, the classic box, the double cube, the square type -- provides a lot of square footage under its hipped or pyramidal roof. This sturdy form was a new entry around 1900 to the common American house forms. Every mail-order house company in

the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century offered a variant of this house. While the Foursquare may have ornamentation associating it with a style, most typically the Colonial Revival, its cubic shape is its dominant visual characteristic.

## VERNACULAR COMMERCIAL, 1890-1940



This early- 20<sup>th</sup>-century photograph was probably taken soon after the rough-faced stone vernacular commercial building was erected to house the Masonic Hall and stores.



Frame of storefront with corner piers and upper area for signage  
Transom windows  
Recessed doorway  
Display window  
Bulkhead



This vernacular commercial building of the 1920's has angled fronts to reflect the curve of the street.

### LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TYPE

1-3 stories, upper stories regularly divided into bays; first story organized around storefronts

Rectangular plan, except at corner locations which may have angled corners; some irregularly shaped plans reflecting curve in street; attached, semi-attached, or freestanding; usually building occupies all or most of width of its property's street front

Various exterior materials

Flat or gable roofs; often gable end to street; some shaped parapets

Multi-story facades have a 3-part composition: a storefront which is mostly glass; a middle part with solid wall and regularly organized windows; and a capping feature (cornice, parapet, and/or a band)

Often the commercial building has evolved over time with additions, replacement exterior surface materials, and later storefronts

The closely spaced or attached buildings which abut the sidewalk provide a sense of spatial enclosure to Closter's historic downtown area along Closter Dock Road and its intersecting side streets between Perry Street and Harrington Avenue. With a few notable exceptions, most of the buildings are modest designs characteristic of vernacular "Main Street" architecture.

Late-19<sup>th</sup>- and early-20<sup>th</sup>-century storefronts are typically located within an opening framed by corner piers and a frieze or signboard area. The entrance is often recessed. Large plate glass display windows are located above low base panels or a

bulkhead. Transom windows, sometimes with small square glass panes, may be located above the display windows and entrance. Usually, there is a clear separation between the storefront and the upper part of the building. Later storefronts may have narrower corner piers and a flatter profile. They may not have a recessed entrance.

In spite of alterations, Closter's historic commercial buildings evidence the community's continuing commercial history. They usually retain their original basic composition, their placement close to other buildings and the sidewalk, some early decorative features, and a pedestrian scale.