

Homes: 1890s—1950s

Phillips & Clark Stove Company. Andes Avenue is to the lower right out of frame.



124 Andes Avenue, before 1894



86 Andes Avenue, around 1900



Andes Avenue was near the Phillips & Clark Stove Company that produced Andes Stoves. The east end of the street was developed before 1894 with the west end gaining houses around 1900. Most of the homeowners worked at the stove company with the rest working for the railroads.

134 Maxwell Avenue, around 1915



60 Maxwell Avenue, around 1933



Maxwell Avenue was laid out as early as 1894, but no homes were built until after 1913. The south end was developed first for business owners and officers of local corporations. The middle of the street was built next and the north end completed in the 1950s.

7 Maxwell Avenue, 1953



West High Street in upper left-hand corner, 1950s



Between 1948 and 1958, West High Street grew from six houses to 36 with two new cross-streets. The street illustrates post-World War II developments featuring single-story homes set back from the street and no sidewalks.

389 (right) and 381 West High Street, between 1954—1956



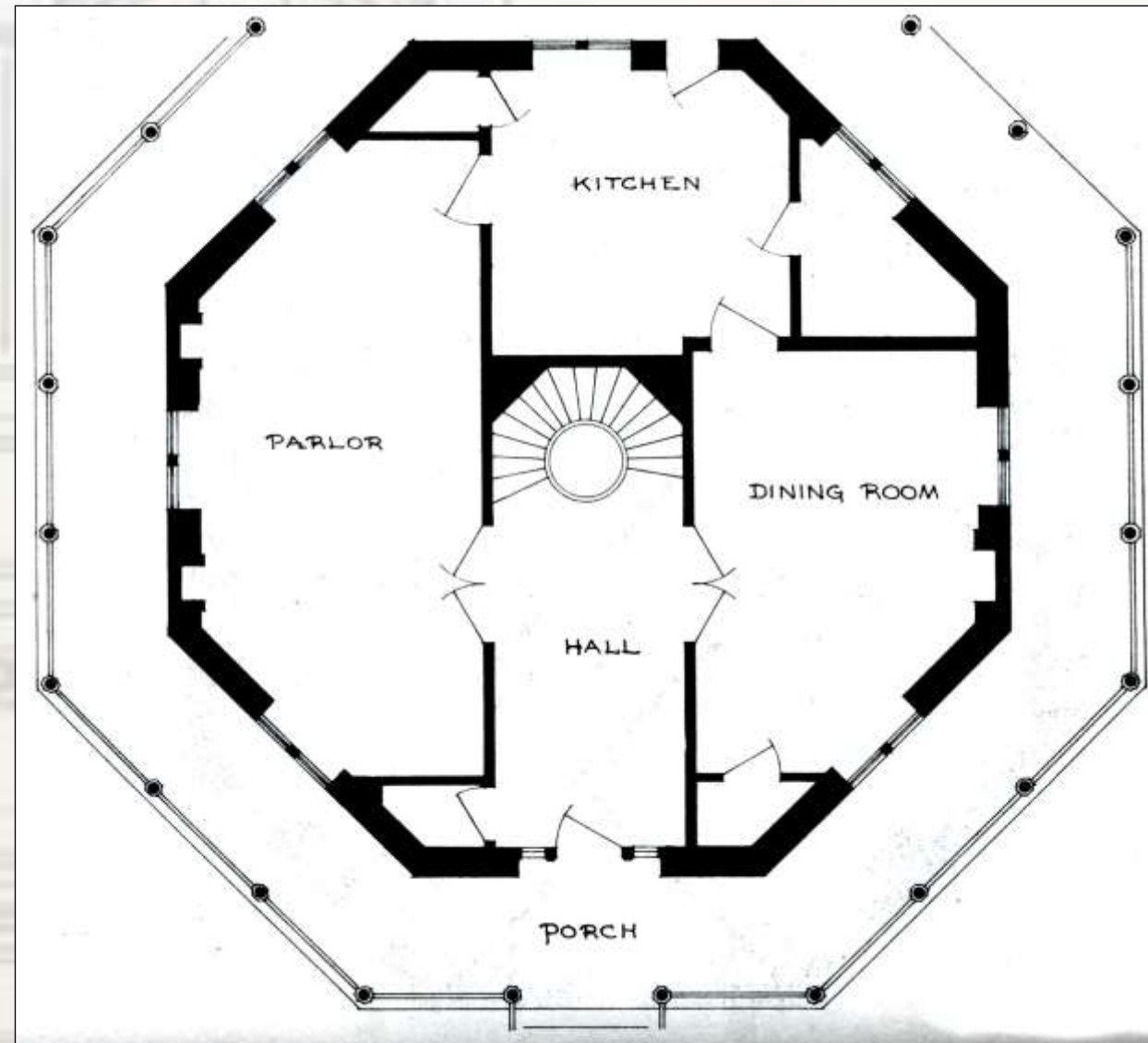
390 West High Street, around 1954



Why Are They Shaped That Way?: Building Forms and Functions

Buildings are designed to keep us comfortable. In the Finger Lakes, we want pitched roofs that shed rain and snow. Plenty of sunlight is appreciated in the winter, but we also want shade in the summer. Property size and money can determine the shapes and sizes from which an owner can choose. Commercial buildings have a different set of needs based on profit motive. Architecture is all about geometry and these issues are all answered by using a combination of basic shapes.

In the 1850s, Orson Fowler promoted the octagon as the perfect shape for buildings. It had more area than a square or rectangle of the same circumference and allowed more light and air into the home.



236 Washington Street, 1900

Features of the Queen Anne style of the late 1800s were multiple roofs, porches, and often a corner tower. The style included many decorative details to break up flat wall surfaces.



51 North Main Street, 1886

Gable front and wing houses were popular for urban lots. The tall, narrow main block faced the street and a side wing was used if room allowed.



1061 Lochland Road

All buildings are containers, but the 20th-century International style emphasized this. Architects rejected traditional elements such as shutters, window hoods, and porches.



**Lynch's Furniture,
485-489 Exchange
Street,
around 1915**

The Chicago commercial style emphasized windows with minimal brickwork to display goods. Steel framework allowed for larger window openings than brick walls.

Home Sweet Home: Residential Architecture

Style has always been an important part of buildings, particularly houses. It can reflect historical architecture, a rejection of previous styles, or it can promote a certain way of living. New designs are promoted to people who want to keep up with the latest fashions. High-style houses are the most detailed and expensive examples. Middle- and working-class houses reflect fashions of their day more modestly through elements such as windows and porches. Neighborhoods are a product of when and how they were built and to whom the houses were marketed.

“Architecture is about three things: keeping warm, keeping dry, and keeping up with the Joneses.”

Penelope Batcheler, National Park Service historical architect



64 North Main Street, 1880

Simple houses could be dressed up with gable “fish scale” shingles and window hoods.



165 Washington Street, 1872

Multiple gables, stone-arched windows, and a slate roof contribute to the fanciness of this house.



461 White Springs Road, around 2010

Modern houses freely adapt classical elements into new proportions.



25 Genesee Park, 1869

This high-style home was built on the north side of Geneva for the wealthy president of New York Central Iron Works.



124 North Main Street, 1840

This house was a throwback to 18th-century English architecture.

Homes: 1790s–1900s

Rowhouses, around 1820



600 South Main Street, 1838



839 South Main Street, 1829



Geneva's earliest developed street, South Main Street was a commercial district around the village square (now Pulteney Park). Rowhouses had businesses on the ground floor with residences above. Larger houses on the south end of the street were built by families who had earned money elsewhere and moved to Geneva in the early 1800s.

98 Washington Street, 1813



210 Washington Street, 1885



363 Washington Street, 1925



Washington Street developed westward up the hill from Pulteney Park. Lawyers, dentists, and other professionals lived nearest the park. West of Grove Street, the houses were built after 1900 for carpenters, nurserymen, and other workers.

53 Genesee Street, 1865



18 North Genesee Street, before 1894



193 North Genesee Street, around 1920



Industrialists, who made their money in Geneva, built large homes on Genesee Street in the mid-1800s. By 1894, the first block past North Street was home to bank managers and policemen. North of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, affordable houses for the working class were marketed to mostly Italian families.

Charm or Change? Historic Preservation

Preservation is maintaining original materials and can be simple as regular painting and keeping the building dry. Restoration involves removing modern features and replacing missing pieces to return a building to an earlier period in time.

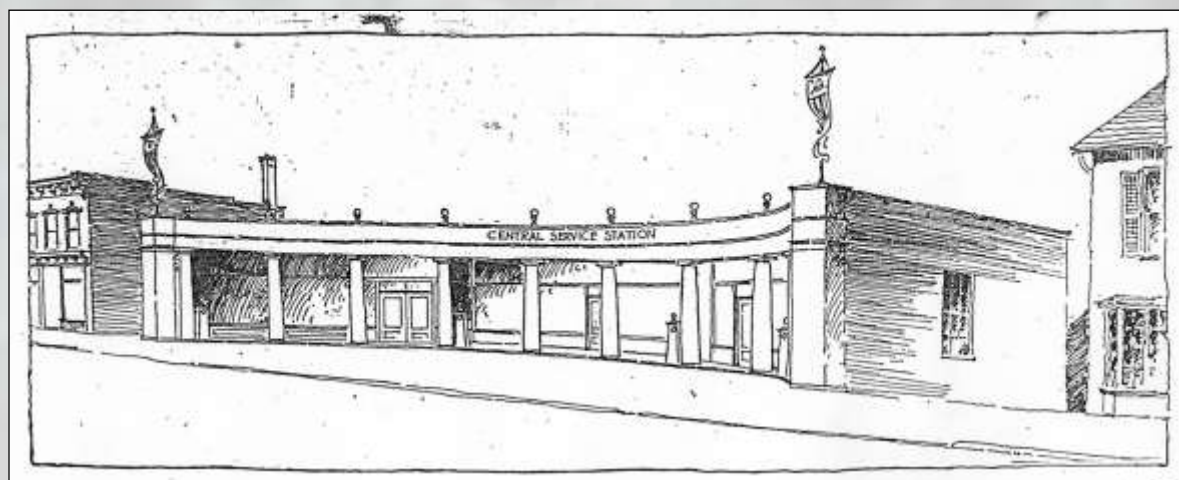
Preservation of old buildings is often framed as nostalgia versus progress. Economically, preservation and restoration create more jobs than new construction. Geneva's historic architecture attracts many tourists to the city. People are supporting local stores in local buildings rather than always shopping in chain stores with bland architecture.



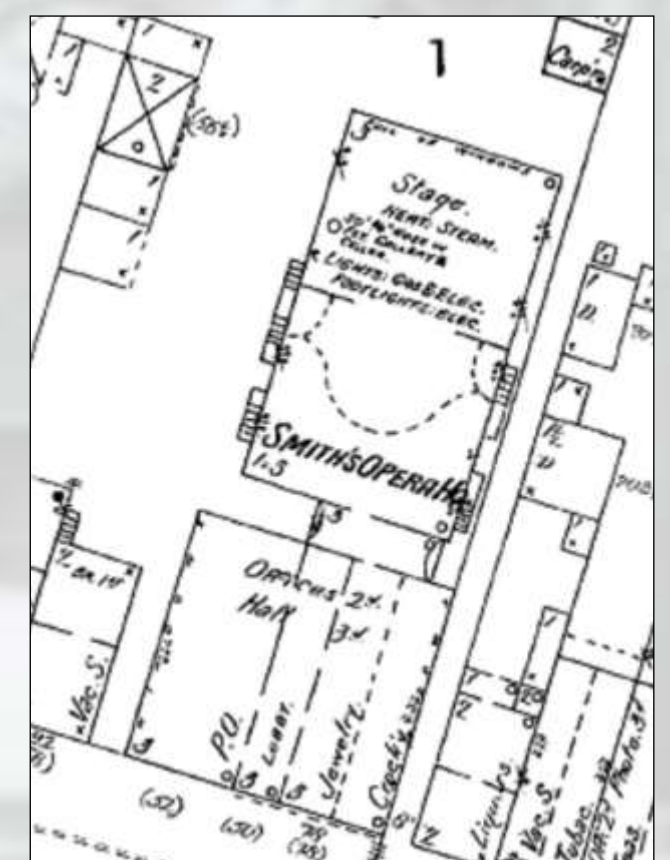
The South Main Street rowhouses were restored beginning in the 1970s when fire escapes were moved from the fronts to the backs of the buildings. Regular painting is part of their preservation.



Historic preservation is primarily concerned with the street views of buildings. Hobart & William Smith Colleges have preserved the exterior of Geneva and Trinity Halls while renovating the interiors for modern needs.



Built in 1925, a unique gas station at 305 Main Street was designed to allow for easy in and out access to gas pumps. Years of inaction and lack of a developer to restore the building contributed to its demolition in 2012.



The Smith Opera House is a combination of restoration and preservation. The exterior was restored to 1894 with the removal of a 20th-century marquee. The inside was preserved as a 1920s movie palace as restoring the seats and balconies to 1894 would have been too difficult.



In 1966, the city used the federal Urban Renewal program to demolish sub-standard buildings on and behind Seneca and South Exchange Streets. The cleared land was put out to bid for redevelopment but proposed plans fell through.

The Builder's Art: Houses from Patterns

In early 19th-century America builders were more common than architects. They understood geometry and ratios and had pattern books to guide them on details. Local buildings we consider grand had no known architect. Mass production of wood and metal elements such as moldings and cast iron railings made it easier to build high-style houses.

In 1925, there were 41 contractors and building tradesmen in the city directory. They often used pattern books that offered clients many style and floor plan options. Sears, Roebuck and Company and others took this a step further by selling all the pre-cut pieces for any house in their catalogues.



Asher Benjamin wrote several guide books for carpenters on classical architecture. His *Practice of Architecture* (1833) shows palmettes on side pilasters and other details which were used at Rose Hill.



William Vogt learned carpentry from several Geneva contractors and began his own general contracting business in 1904. He built over 300 houses in and around Geneva, including his family home at 277 Washington Street.



There are several guide books to identify Sears kit homes based on floor plans and exterior measurements. Demolished in 2016, a Sears house on Routes 5 & 20 east of the city was used by Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

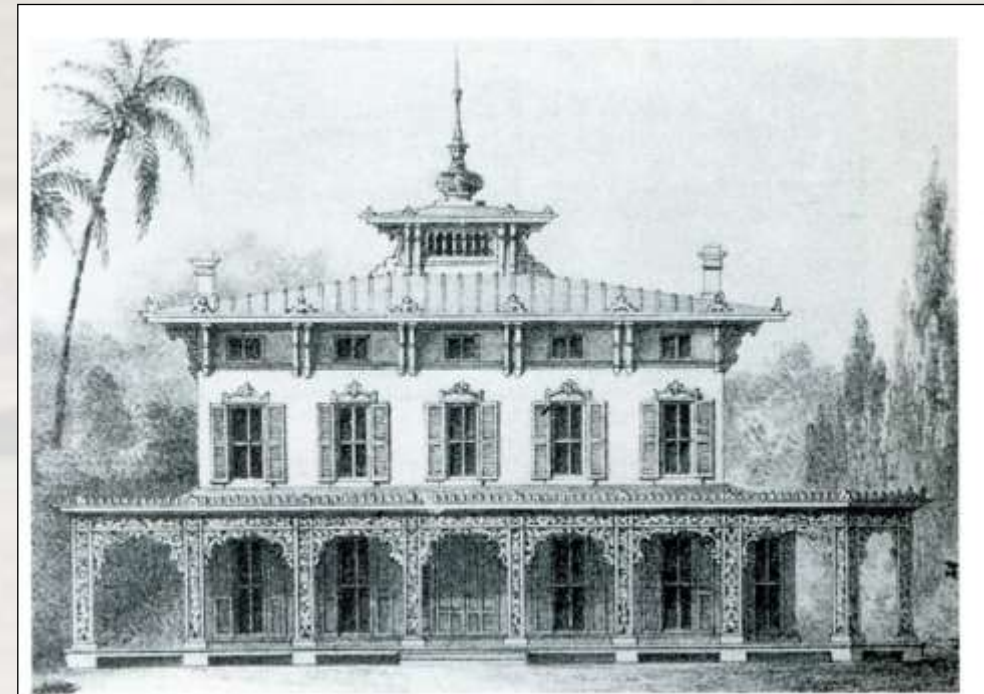


Fig. 122. Sloan, 2: plate XLVII, detail.



Fig. 123. Denton Mansion, Geneva, New York, 1856.

Samuel Sloan's *The Model Architect* (1852) included many details for Italianate houses. The Denton house on North Street was built in 1856 and is almost an exact copy of one of Sloan's drawings. Denton's home had a cupola which has been removed.



Local building supplier R.J. Rogers Lumber Company distributed national pattern books published by the Lumber Dealers' Service Bureau. The books made new home choices easier for everyone and encouraged business for builders and suppliers.