

THE KIT HOUSE IN SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA

*Architectural Documentation of Kit Houses
Manufactured by Sears, Roebuck and Company
Located within the Cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk,
Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach, Virginia*



Prepared for:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

and

The Cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach

Prepared by:

William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research

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WMCAR Project No. 05-35

PREPARED FOR:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, Virginia

AND

The Cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth,
Suffolk, and Virginia Beach

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ABSTRACT

In the winter of 2005 and early spring of 2006, the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research conducted reconnaissance and intensive architectural surveys of properties in the Tidewater cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. The goal of the project was to document houses built from kits manufactured by Sears, Roebuck, and Company in the five cities. Limited to a total of 195 reconnaissance surveys and 10 intensive surveys, the study is by no means exhaustive. Instead, the results and interpretation are intended to provide a baseline of information about kit houses within the five participating Tidewater cities and form a foundation for future research on kit houses in the region. Another anticipated outcome of this project is to provide a model for conducting future thematic architectural investigations in Virginia.

A major challenge recognized at the beginning of the project was to identify a sample of Sears kit houses within a survey area containing several hundred thousand houses. Drawing on historical maps, previous surveys of historic districts, and the knowledge of local informants, properties were selected that fell within the range of manufacturing dates for Sears kits (1908–1940). Windshield surveys of these areas identified houses that resembled any of the dozens of models produced by Sears. During the course of fieldwork, it became apparent that a minimum of 40 Sears kit houses might not be identified for each city during the survey. It was then decided to broaden the scope of the research to also include kit houses made by other manufacturers such as the Aladdin Company.

Of the 195 properties documented through reconnaissance survey, at least 12 models of Sears kit houses and nine Aladdin models are represented. A named Sears or Aladdin model could be positively identified for at least 33 properties, with representation in each of the five cities. Numerous other properties may be kit houses or copies of kit houses by local builders. The report provides recommendations for areas with high potential for future kit house survey efforts, adjustments to existing historic districts, and general guidelines for future research on kit houses in the region.

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At the WMCAR, architectural historian Meg Greene Malvasi was responsible for conducting the survey and writing the report. Courtney Birkett assisted with the fieldwork and processed DSS forms and supporting materials. Joe Jones, the WMCAR director, provided general supervision. The report was produced by David Lewes, and final graphics were prepared by Eric Agin and David Meincke.

1: Introduction

From February 2006 through June 2006, the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research (WMCAR) conducted a reconnaissance-level architectural survey of 195 properties and intensive-level architectural survey of 10 properties in the Virginia Tidewater cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach to document homes built from kits that were sold by Sears, Roebuck and Company (Sears) between 1908 and 1940 (Figure 1). The project was sponsored by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) and the five cities, through a cost share agreement made in 2004.

From 1908 to 1940, Sears marketed and sold kit houses throughout the United States. Over the course of this period, the company sold plans, instructions, and pre-cut lumber and other building materials for several hundred house models representing popular styles of domestic architecture. Recent scholarship indicates the importance of Sears kit houses in the development of early twentieth-century residential neighborhoods. This documentation project was designed to provide a baseline of information about kit houses within the five participating Tidewater cities. Project findings form a foundation for future research on kit houses in the region as well as outlining a model for conducting future thematic architectural investigations in Virginia.

As there were no preconceived physical boundaries set by the project guidelines other than the cities themselves, the survey team worked within a fairly large radius of each city (Figures 2–7). In each case, the areas surveyed during the course of the project ranged from neighborhood groupings

of kit homes in late-nineteenth and early twentieth century streetcar suburbs and planned suburban neighborhood communities to isolated examples of kit houses found in semi-rural or rural areas. Of the properties surveyed in each of the localities, the overwhelming majority were found near or in within existing historic districts in each city.

The Cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach together form the southeasternmost portion of Tidewater Virginia. This area, encompassing a total of 1,076 square miles, is bounded to the north by the Chesapeake Bay and James River, to the west by the Atlantic Ocean, to the south by the state of North Carolina, and to the east by the counties of Isle of Wight and Southampton. According to census data, the total population of the five cities in 2000 was 1,030,445 (Table 1). The study area was among the first portions of Virginia settled by the English in the seventeenth century. Apart from Norfolk and Portsmouth, however, most of the area remained largely rural until the mid-twentieth century. The cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach still encompass large areas of agricultural land, forests, and swamps, including about 100 square miles of the Great Dismal Swamp in Chesapeake and Suffolk. It is only since the 1960s that Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach were incorporated as cities through mergers of urban areas and rural counties. Over the course of the twentieth century, Norfolk and Portsmouth also have expanded their boundaries by annexing adjacent land.

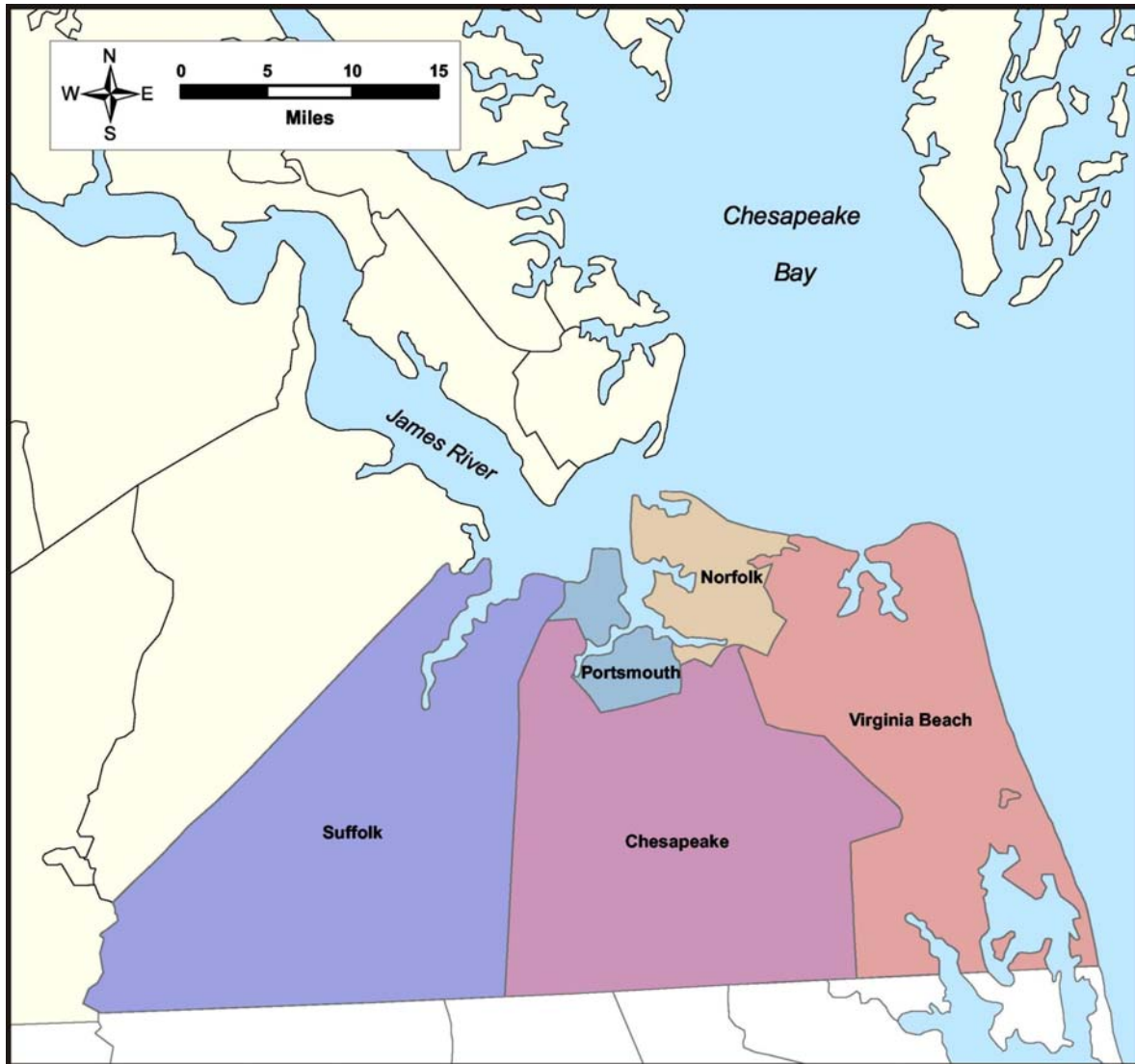


Figure 1. Location of the five cities in the study area.

CITY	AREA (SQ. MILES)	POPULATION (2000 CENSUS)	POPULATION DENSITY
Chesapeake	341	203,796	598
Norfolk	54	233,147	4318
Portsmouth	33	99,494	3015
Suffolk	400	67107	168
Va. Beach	248	426,931	1721
TOTAL	1076	1,030,445	958

Table 1. Summary of population and land area for the study area (University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 2003).



Figure 2a. Location of areas surveyed in Chesapeake (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 1986e).

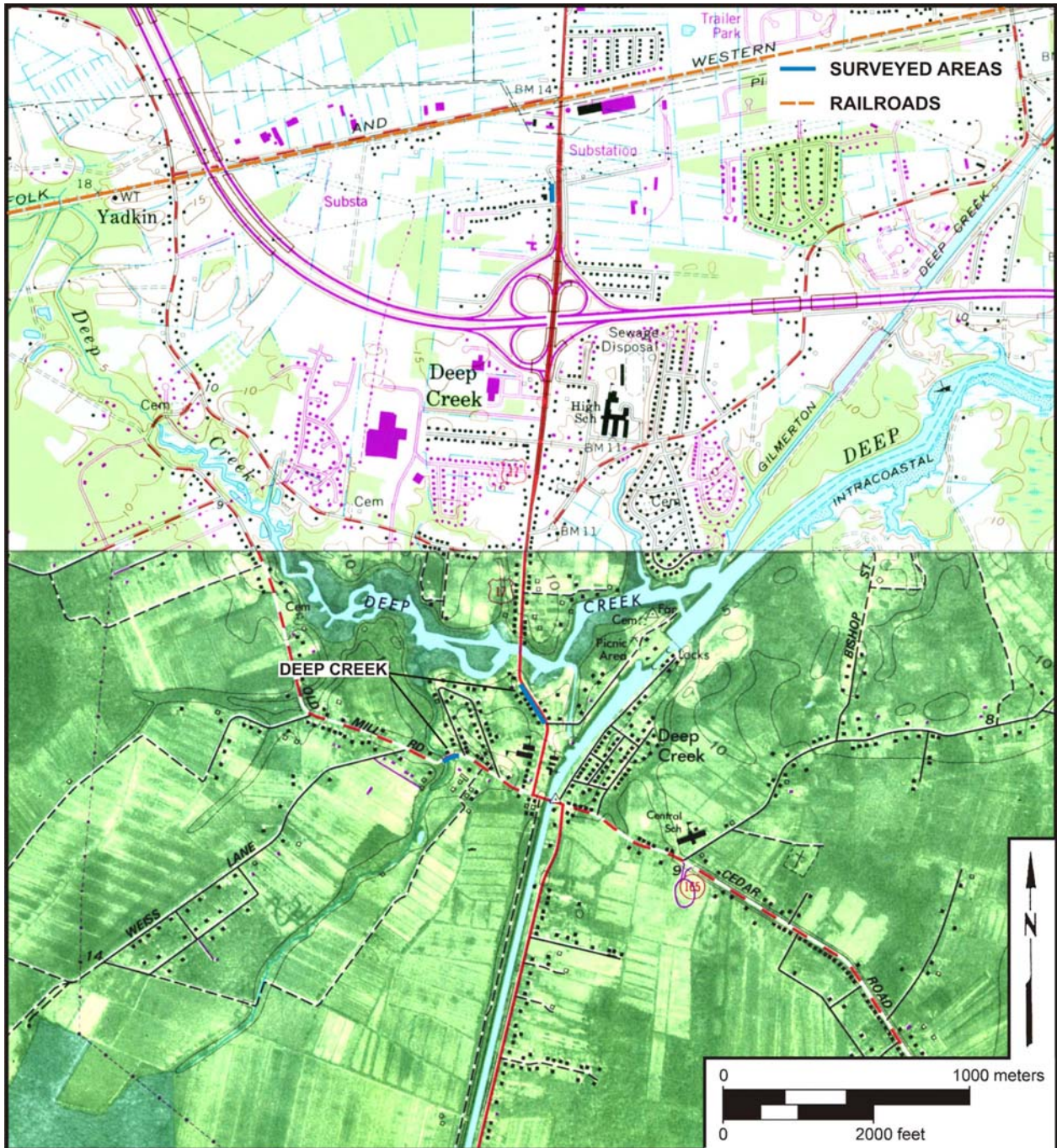


Figure 2b. Location of areas surveyed in Chesapeake (USGS 1986b, 1986e).

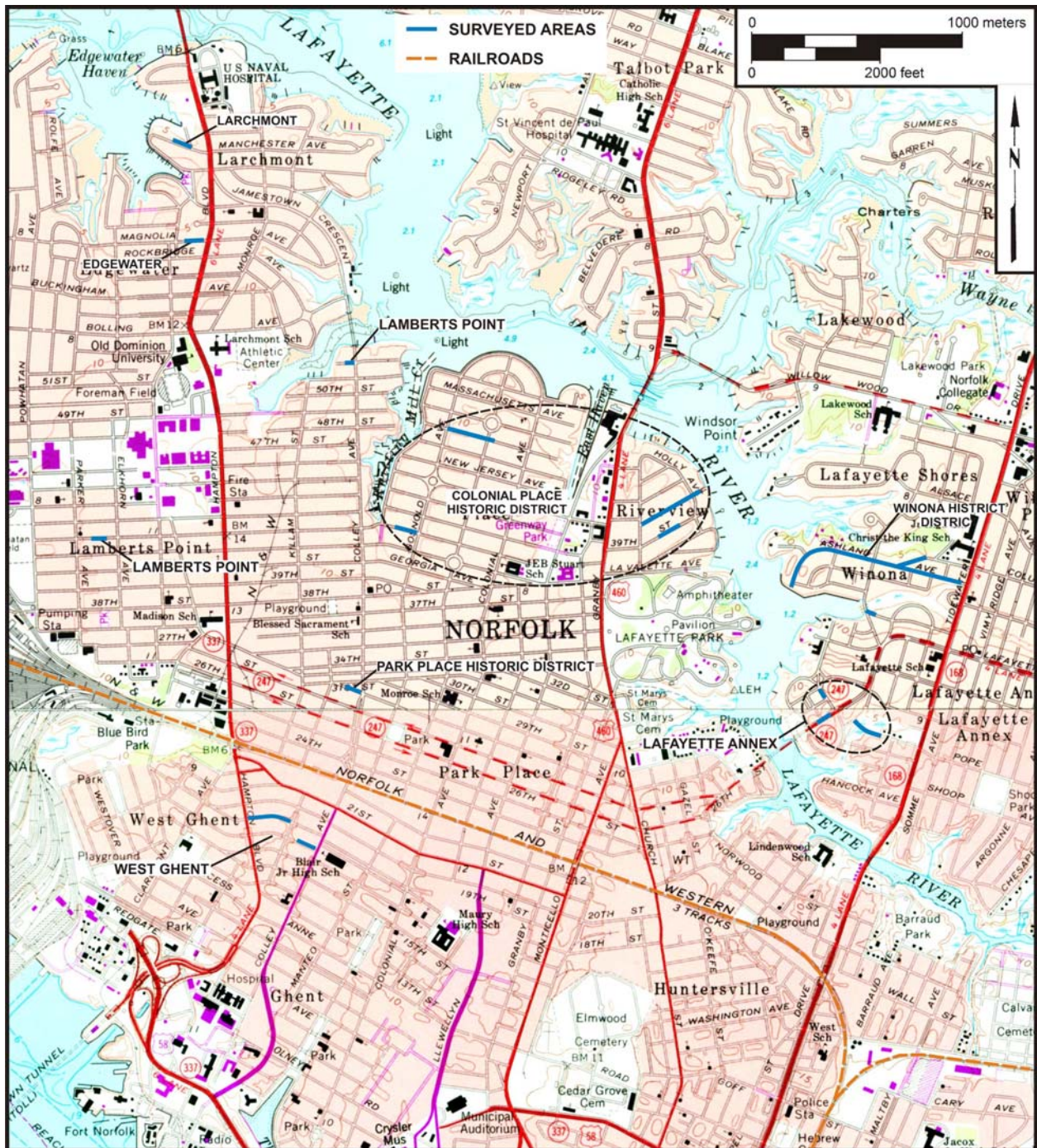


Figure 3. Location of areas surveyed in Norfolk (USGS 1986d, 1986e).

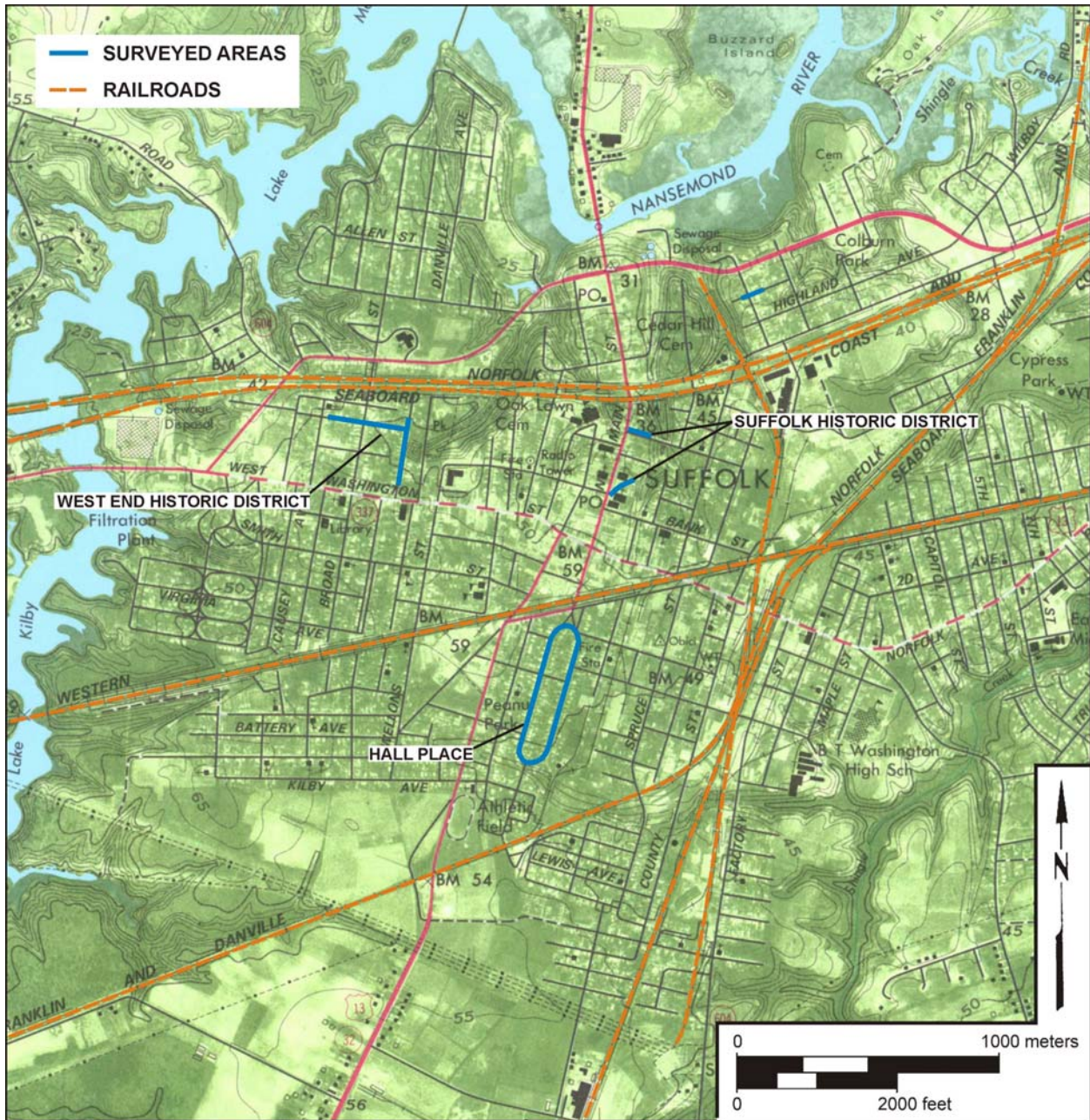


Figure 4. Location of areas surveyed in Suffolk (USGS 1977).

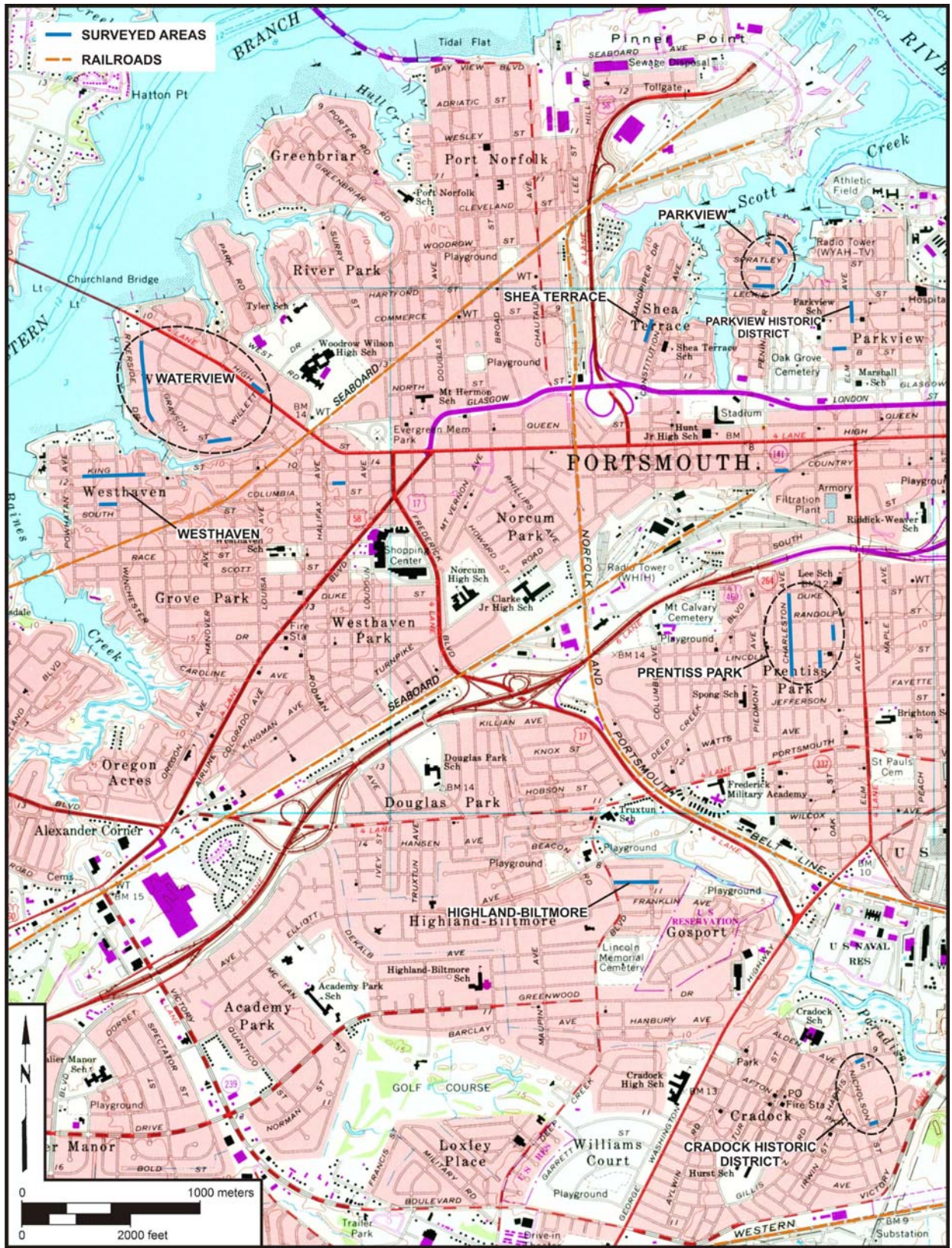


Figure 5. Location of areas surveyed in Portsmouth (USGS 1986).

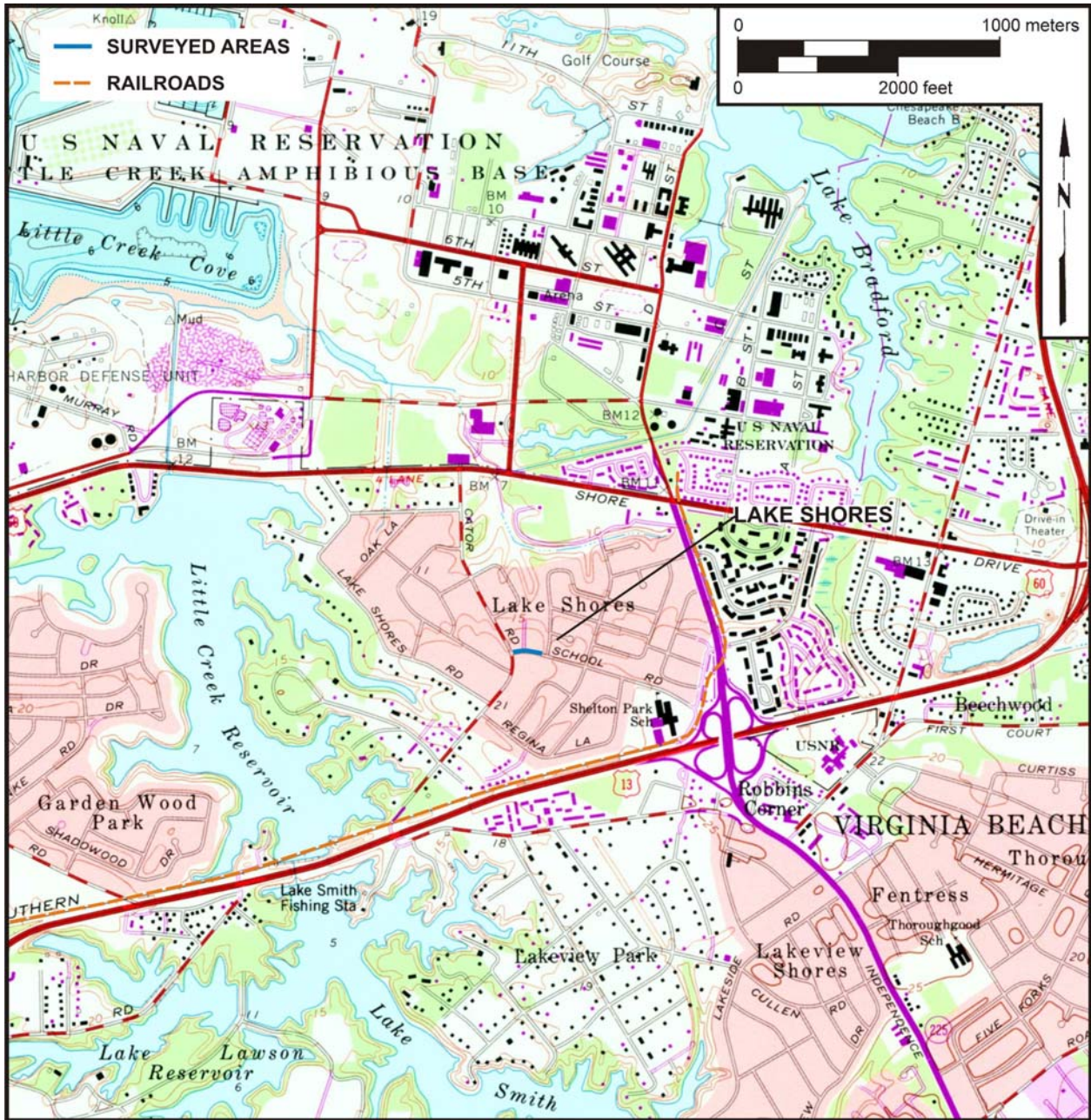


Figure 6a. Location of areas surveyed in Virginia Beach (USGS 1986c).

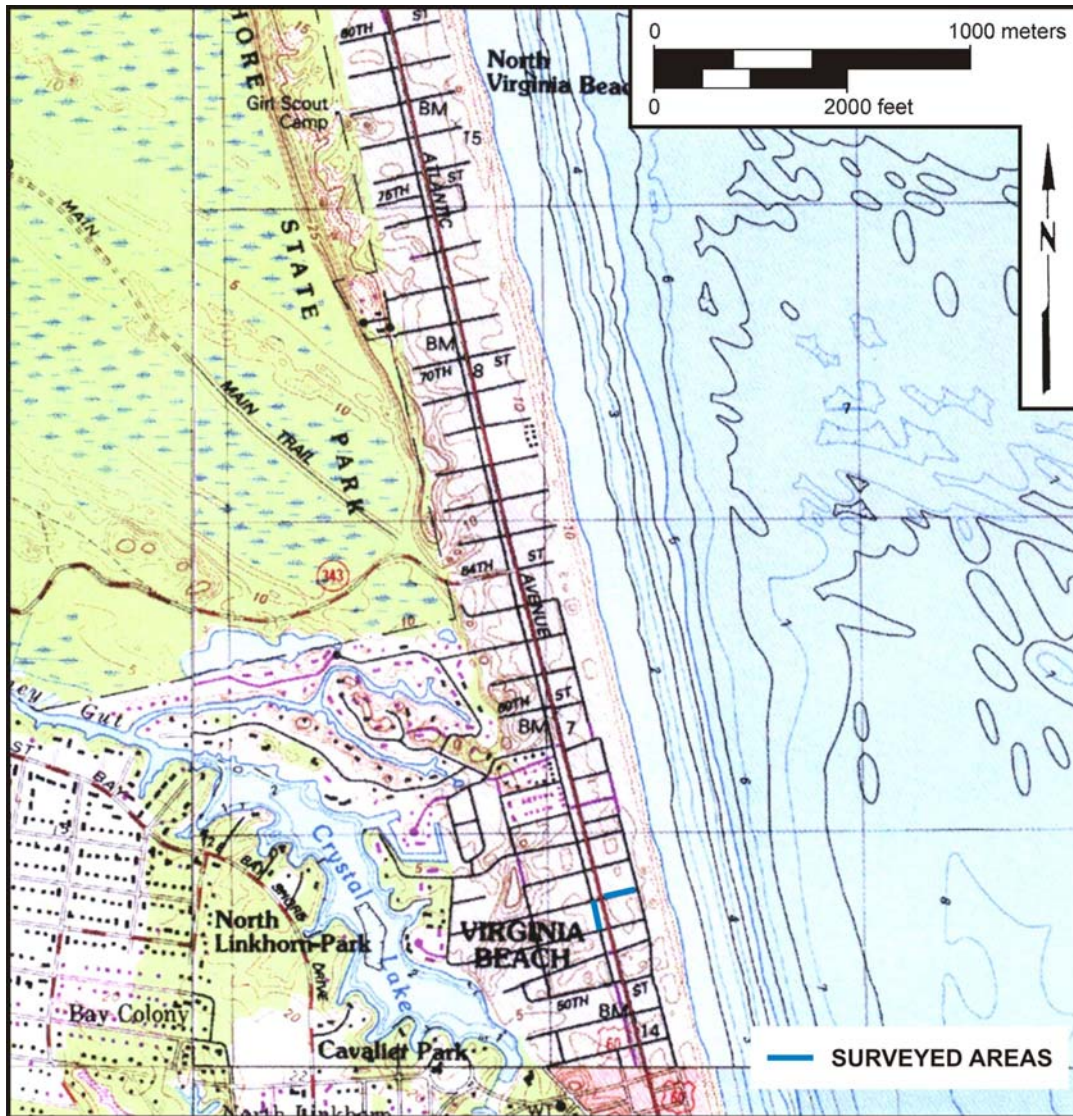


Figure 6b. Location of areas surveyed in Virginia Beach (USGS 1986a, 1986f, 1986g, 1986h).

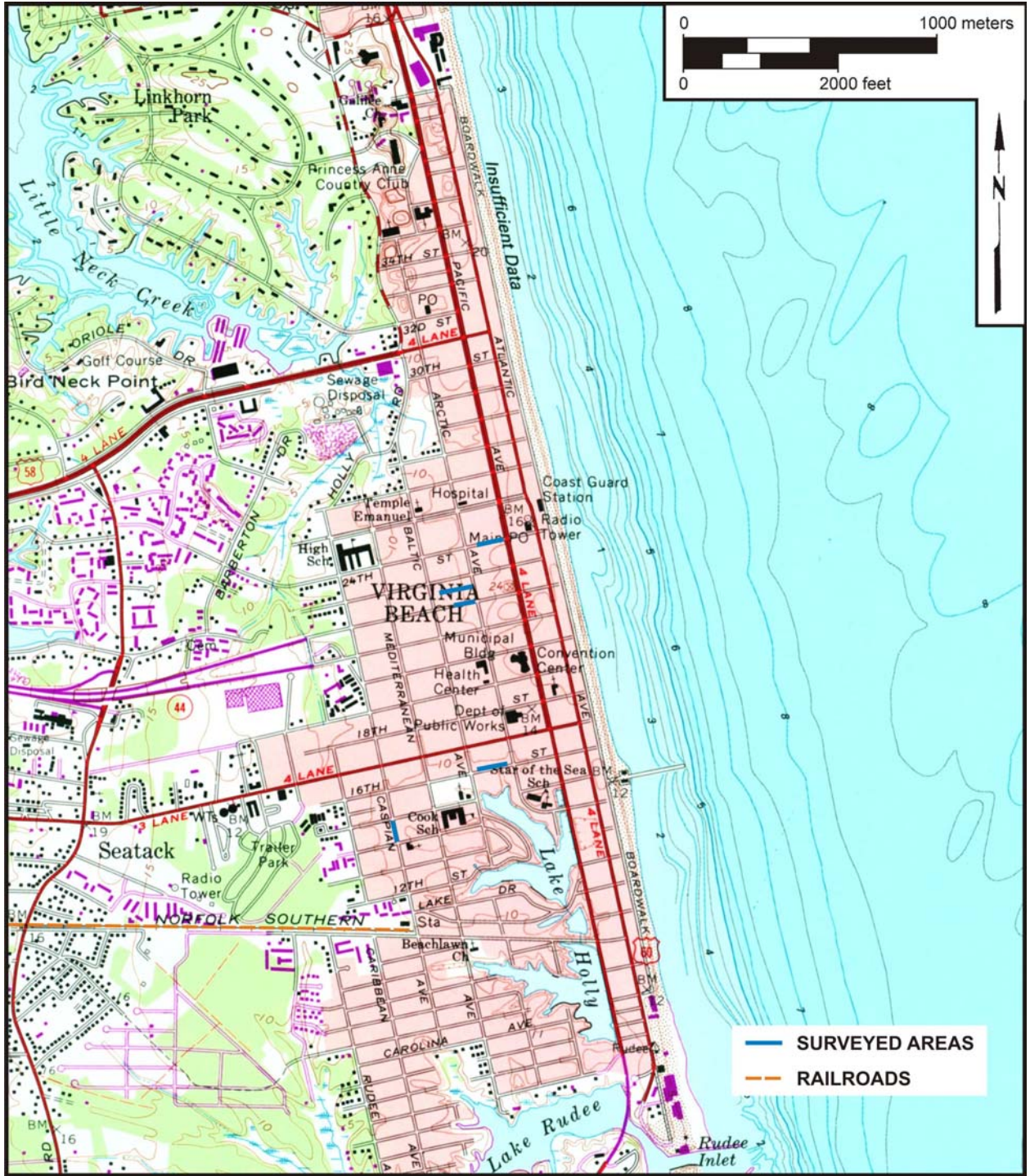


Figure 6c. Location of areas surveyed in Virginia Beach (USGS 1986h).

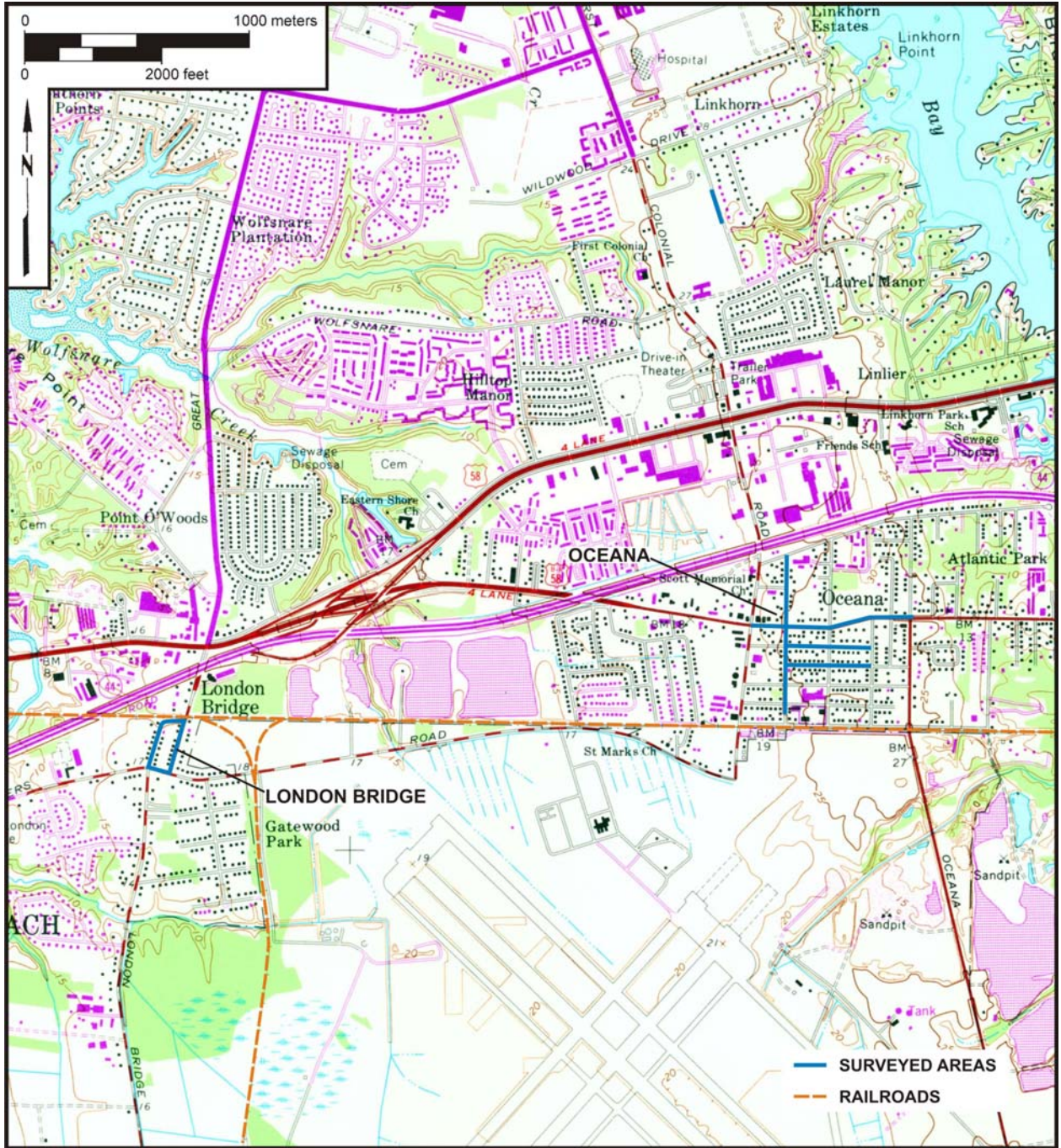


Figure 6d. Location of areas surveyed in Virginia Beach (1986g).

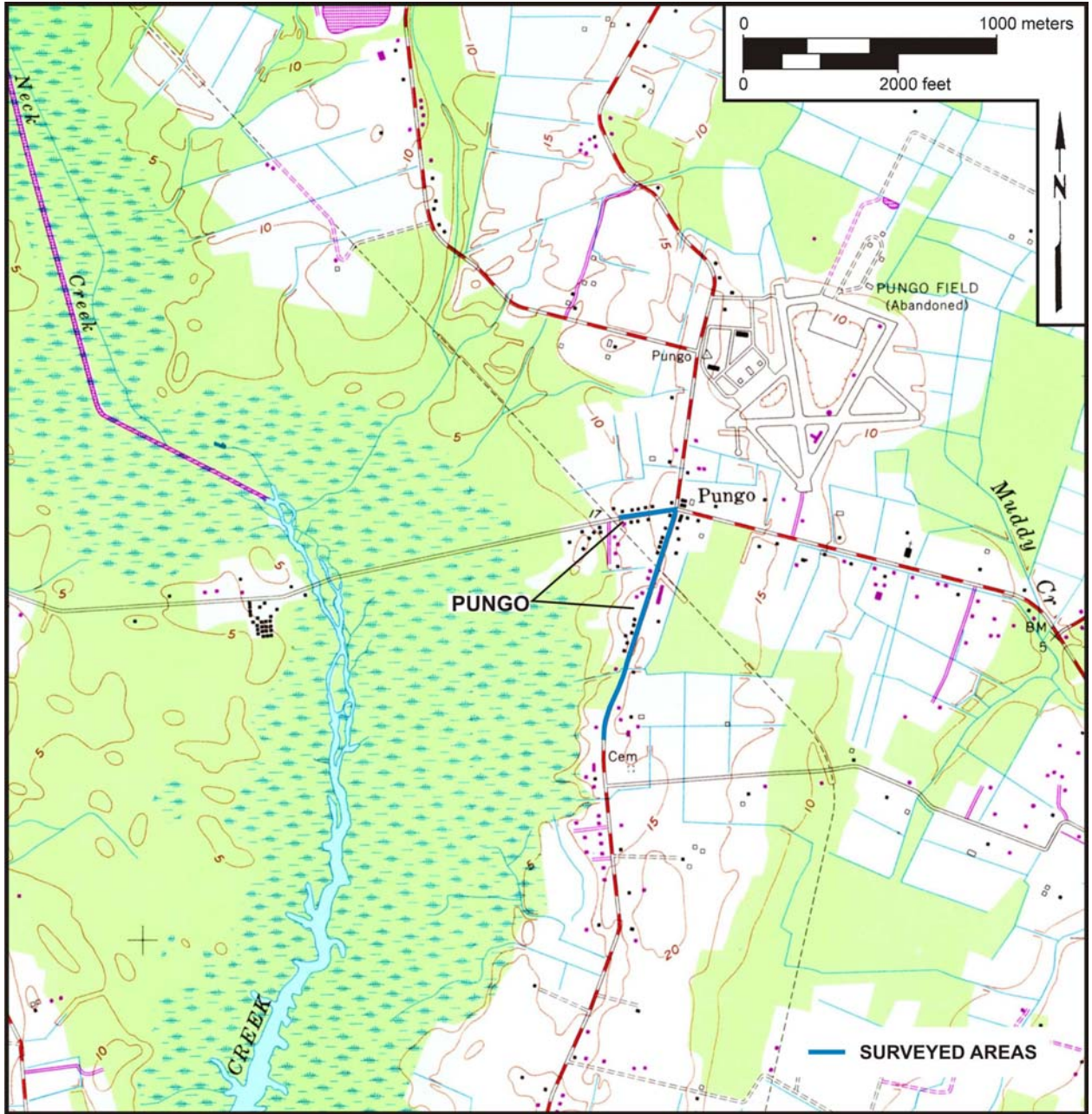


Figure 6e. Location of areas surveyed in Virginia Beach (USGS 1979).

2: Methodology and General Historical Context

PREPARATION

A number of approaches were taken to conduct this survey. In preparation for the survey, maps of each city locality were studied. Real estate records documenting buildings constructed during the period 1908 to 1940 were also located in order to get a sense of neighborhoods where kit houses may have been built. Using sources at the VDHR and the Library of Virginia, railroad maps were consulted to gauge areas and neighborhoods that were located near railroad depots that could also yield possible kit houses. Proximity to rail transportation was key to construction of kit houses before the era of interstate highways and long-distance tractor trailer freight began in the 1950s. Finally, consulting reprints of both Sears and Aladdin company catalogues also provided the surveyors with information about the various models that were popular nationally and which might be located within the areas to be surveyed. Drive-arounds were scheduled in each city in order to become familiar with areas where kit houses were known to exist as well as areas where it was thought kit houses were located. Finally, walking through the neighborhoods during the course of each survey allowed the surveyor and field assistant to identify and locate kit houses.

The surveyor also had to learn how to identify Sears and Aladdin kit houses. Among the possible sources and clues that aid in the identification of Sears houses:

- Guide books such as Stevenson and Jandl's *Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company* (1986), or the reprint of the *1917 Aladdin Home Catalogue*

(1995) offer illustrations of house models from Sears and the Aladdin catalogues for comparison with standing structures.

- Fenestration patterns on the houses are revealing; even with extensive alterations, window placement rarely changed over time.
- Porch ornamentation, such as particular styles of columns and decorative roof brackets, also offer evidence of possible kit houses. Both Sears and Aladdin had signature porch and bracket designs. Although finding these elements is not conclusive, they often provide evidence of a kit house design.
- Courthouse records on occasion provide information on Sears houses, as Sears offered financing on its houses from 1914 to 1933.
- If allowed into the interior of a house, looking for stamped lumber, shipping labels, house plans, or assessing hardware and sheet plaster also can indicate a kit house.

The surveyor also relied on information provided by phone and e-mail from individuals in each locality that helped to pinpoint specific locations and, in many cases, made possible a positive identification of a kit house. An article in a supplement of the *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper invited residents of kit houses to contact the survey team; responses from the article helped identify several properties suitable for survey (Speidell 2006).

The survey was not without its challenges. Perhaps the most difficult problem to overcome was the ability to identify kit houses, particularly houses that had undergone heavy alteration. In many neighborhoods, dwellings were covered in vinyl or aluminum siding. On more than one occasion,

porch elements had also been covered over with siding, as were roof braces and brackets. In other instances, houses had been altered through new additions, replacement windows, or through alteration of porches or roofs. But perhaps the biggest challenge came from trying to match house styles and designs with those illustrated in the catalogues. One of the many aspects of the kit house popularity was the ability to customize the customer's dwelling. This could include anything from reversing floor plans, moving the placement of the chimney, changing the roof-line and in some cases combining more than one style on a single plan.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Reconstruction and Growth (1865-1917)

By 1865, the United States saw the settlement of two important issues in the nation: first, that the former states of the Confederacy would remain as part of the United States and second, the institution of slavery was forever abolished throughout the land. Now the country was faced with the problem of how best to bring the formerly rebellious states back into the Union. Politically, the region was still a political hot potato as legislators argued how best to carry out the "reconstruction" of the war-torn area. The South also faced issues of its own; its economy broken and the old antebellum order in pieces, the region faced the daunting task of restructuring itself economically, politically and socially.

The Civil War had left the state of Virginia in a shambles: the industrial base was gone, the state's railroad system has been crippled, and many of the state's towns and cities were in ruins. The agricultural life of the state was shattered. State residents, black and white struggled to find food, shelter, and jobs. Under the federal government's plan of reconstruction, Virginia found itself having to adapt to a new way of life. But without the economic capital to rebuild industry and agriculture, the state could do little. Instead, it turned to

the North and wealthy investors to help rebuild the state. For the next two decades, northern money resurrected the railroad lines which in turn helped farmers and industry leaders to sell and ship goods not only through the state, but to the nation (Salmon and Campbell 1994).

With the coming of the Second Industrial Revolution in 1870, business became king in the United States. By 1875, the country's industrial output rose by more than 75 percent and in the process creating an entirely new "royalty" headed by many of America's wealthiest financiers and businessmen. The Second Industrial Revolution changed the way Americans lived and worked. Innovations in new industries such as steel and oil led to new advances in the transportation industry. Inventions such as the electric light, the telegraph and telephone made it easier for people to stay in touch. Demand for labor also rose in the many factories and plants throughout the country. The rise in the late-nineteenth century of large retail stores such as Sears and Roebuck and Montgomery Ward also helped tie the various regions of the nation together with their introduction of printed catalogues of various types of goods such as clothing, farm implements, furniture and by the first decade of the twentieth century kit houses, all of which could be ordered by mail.

In the wake of the old antebellum economy, Virginia began expanding and developing new industries. By 1876, the state and in particular Richmond had reestablished itself as a leader in the manufacture and distribution of tobacco products, especially cigarettes. Danville, Virginia emerged as a leader in the textile industry using cotton and wool grown throughout the region. As Virginia's economic growth increased, it touched on other facets of life as seen in the growth of schools and colleges, and a flourishing cultural life (Salmon and Campbell 1994).

The urban landscape was redesigned in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Residential neighborhoods became characterized by their inhabitants' class, religion, nationality, race, and

occupation. The changing nature and increasing size of cities created a persistent call for massive new construction and building materials. Through the late-nineteenth century, brick, cut stone, concrete, cast and wrought iron, and wood became standard building materials. Americans also made use of new building technologies using iron and steel supports. The introduction of reinforced concrete in the mid-1880s gave rise to a new municipal building form, the skyscraper, a symbol of corporate wealth and success that quickly transformed the city skyline.

With the introduction of the electric streetcar, urban transportation underwent a dramatic change. Increasingly numbers of people sought to escape the dirt and hectic pace of the city. As cities expanded along streetcar routes, skilled workers were able to move farther from their workplaces and out of slums, and permitted middle-class families to move to new suburban neighborhoods.

These innovations along with the emerging field of urban planning did not pass by Virginia. With the advent of the streetcar, larger Virginia cities began spreading out with streetcar suburbs of their own. In cities such as Portsmouth and Norfolk, private developers experimented with new housing communities. Influenced by the City Beautiful movement, areas such as Winona and Lafayette Park in Norfolk or Cradock or Parkview in Portsmouth offered an oasis from the bustle of the city with their diverse house styles, tree-lined and curving streets, sidewalks and on occasion a small park. In neighborhoods where rail lines were close by, the appearance of kit houses from companies such as Sears and Aladdin began dotting the various neighborhoods throughout the state.

World War I to World War II (1917-1945)

By 1914, the world was at war as the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria battled the Allied powers of Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy and later the United States. With an Allied victory in 1918, America's role as a burgeoning world power was

recognized. The 1920s ushered in a new "culture of consumption" in which Americans were lured to products of all kinds driven by a new era of advertising and industrial design. Mass production in everything from cars to clothing to houses helped keep costs low and demand high. However, with the stock market crash in October 1929, the country was once again plunged into a depression that affected not only the nation but the entire world. Unemployment rose, money was tight as many Americans lost businesses, farms, homes, and in some cases, families. With the election in 1932 of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the country began slowly to recover through his "New Deal," a series of programs and reform measures designed to put people to work. Unfortunately with the rise of various dictatorships in Germany, Italy, and Japan, the world soon found itself at war again by 1939. Although the United States tried to maintain a neutral stance, by December 7, 1941, with the bombing of the naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, the United States was again a member of the Allied forces fighting in Europe and Asia to keep the world free. With the surrender of Germany and Japan in 1945, the United States now turned its energies to dealing with the new postwar society and culture, and its new role as a world super power.

The stock market crash and beginning of the Great Depression hit Virginia particularly hard. However with the assistance of many of the New Deal programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Public Works Administration (PWA) the built and natural landscape of Virginia's began to change. New parks, bridges and highways were created or improved. With both World Wars, the state also experienced a boom in population as servicemen and women came to the state to join the war effort. Industries, such as the textile industry or the shipyards increased production to assist the war effort at home. Others came in search of work in the factories also helping to increase the state population (Salmon and Campbell 1994).

3: Building from a Book

The thought of ordering a house through a mail-order catalogue right down the lumber and nails to build it sounds amusing today. In fact, though, one of the most important American architectural movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the widespread use of house plans and house catalogues purchased through the mail. Not only did this allow the potential house buyer to bypass an architect, a contractor, and even the hardware store or lumber yard, it offered a world of possibilities in building a house that for many Americans was something only dreamt about.

Building houses from books is not new to architectural history. Probably the first pattern book, so-called for the designs, or drawings of architectural elements featured, dates back as early as 90 B.C. with the appearance of Roman engineer Marcus Vitruvius Pollio's *De Architectura*. The book featured ten "books" or chapters that outlined the theory and history of architecture and was illustrated with architectural elements such as temples, columns, and arches. In addition, Vitruvius set forth some of the most important principles in building. He argued that a structure must exhibit the three qualities of *firmitas*, *utilitas*, *venustas*—that is, strength, utility and beauty. His work also stressed the importance of the relationship between the building and the natural world. To Vitruvius, architecture should imitate nature. In this sense, man was no different from other animals; just as animals constructed nests, dens, tunnels, and dams from natural materials, so should humans rely on the same materials in constructing their own shelters and buildings. These simple ideas in effect laid the groundwork for the

evolution of pattern books and the reshaping of architecture styles and aesthetics for centuries to come.

During the Middle Ages, craftsmen and guilds worked with templates, drawings and their own experience in order to design and build structures. By the time of the Renaissance, other authors such as Sebastino Serlio's work, *Regole generali di architettura sopra la cinque maniere de gli edifice* or the *Five Rules of Architectures for Buildings*, first published in 1537, were setting down not only ideas but illustrations in how to build sound and stylish architecture (Reiff 2000).

By the mid-sixteenth century, English craftsmen were introduced to pattern books from abroad as well as beginning to create their own, among them John Shute's publishing of *First and Chief Groundes of Architecture* in 1563. This along with the publication of Andrea Palladio's *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, or the *Four Books of Architecture* in 1570, only underscores the importance and the influence that these early pattern and design guides had on emerging trends in European architectural history. By now, pattern books had become the most efficient way for architects and craftsmen to communicate their ideas to each other (Schweitzer and Davis 1990).

TO AMERICA

By the early eighteenth century, the pattern book underwent a significant development. These new publications now included architectural designs that could be adapted, instead of being strictly copied as craftsmen had done previously. The popu-

larity of these new pattern books in England alone was tremendous; by the mid-eighteenth century, more than 480 titles were in circulation. The widespread availability of these books soon made it possible for the emergence of not only grand mansions but also small yeoman cottages which, through the careful placement of a classical pediment or column, showed no less grand aspirations (Reiff 2000).

By the late eighteenth century, as English pattern books were entering into their ascendancy, the same books were introduced to the early English colonial settlements in the New World, opening yet another new world of building and the interpretation of style and elements. Initially, American building patterns tended to rely on the inspiration of early English Medieval architecture; this was later pushed aside for the more popular and sophisticated classical designs both in the North and the South. Soon, English and later American, pattern books were an integral part of the American builder's repertoire. It is of little surprise then that during the first three centuries of American architecture, pattern books played a very important role in the development of both high and vernacular styles of American architecture.

By the early to mid-nineteenth century, pattern books underwent another transformation. Through a series of books, practicing New England architect and writer Asher Benjamin helped popularize many of the desired late colonial elements in American architecture. His *Practical House Carpenter: Being a Complete Development of the Grecian Order of Architecture* (1830) played a major role in the newly emerging Greek and Gothic revivals (Gowans 1992).

Another contemporary of Benjamin's, architect and author Minard Lafever also helped influence popular architectural stylings through his works, including *The Young Builder's General Instructor* (1829), *The Modern Builder's Guide* (1833), *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* (1835), *The Modern Practice of Staircase and Handrail Construction...* (1838), and *The Architectural Instructor* (1856).

The first three books illustrated the Greek Revival forms and other building designs along with numerous examples of doors, windows, fireplaces, friezes, interior wall details, and ceiling and window treatments. Lafever's book also included two house plans; both were for small dwellings featuring small porticoes with classical elements. Lafever, a former carpenter turned architect, was explicit in the targeted audience and purpose for his books. For instance, in *The Modern Builder's Guide* he stated that his work was aimed at "carpenters and builders in general, but especially . . . the wants of such as are commencing the study and practice of the building art," rather than an experienced architect (Reiff 2000:46). In *Practical House Carpenter*, Lafever stated his purpose even more clearly; this time, the material was to make his patterns useful for the "practical builder," so that "a workman of ordinary capacity can make himself perfect master of the orders, without the aid of an instructor (Reiff 2000: 46). The same period also saw the emergence of pattern books that not only featured specific architectural elements, but also more house plans, in addition to technical information about the building process such as framing, roof construction, and building staircases. The early efforts of both Benjamin and Lafever signaled a turning away from the trained eyes and hands of the architect and in its place a growing recognition of the importance of the everyday builder and craftsman (Reiff 2000; Lafever 1969).

THE LEGACY OF DOWNING AND JACKSON

By the early to mid-nineteenth century, pattern books had become indispensable to the American builder. Perhaps the most important turning point for American pattern books was the publication in 1837 of Alexander Jackson Davis's *Rural Residences, Etc., Consisting of Designs, Original and Selected, for Cottages, Farm-Houses, Villas and Village Churches*. In his book, Davis, arguably America's greatest architect of the mid-nineteenth

century, outlined the principles of the architectural style known as the “Picturesque,” which featured among other things, gothic-styled cottage residences in lovely pastoral settings. But Davis’s book is not important so much for the architecture but for the ideas he espoused. His plans were not necessarily to be copied verbatim, and even though he suggested materials to use, the book’s strength is as a source of general architectural ideas rather than a book to copy from (Donoghue 1982).

Davis was not alone in advocating a new direction for architecture. A. J. Downing, a contemporary of Davis’s, also published his ideas for a new direction in architectural style. Uninterested in promoting designs for high-style buildings suited for the wealthy, Downing instead chose to concentrate on promoting “good taste” for the American middle class, a group that in spite of the pattern book, was still largely overlooked by architects. In his books, particularly *Victorian Cottage Residences* (1842) and *Architecture of Country Houses, Including Designs for Cottages, Farm Houses and Villas* (1850), Downing suggested a more progressive approach to residential architecture by combining good design and healthy environments. According to Downing, residences should be asymmetrically planned, irregular, and uncontrolled. Downing advocated the appropriate placement of dwellings and outbuildings for their optimal utilization and function (Figure 7). Color, particularly the use of earth tones, also was important in harmoniously bonding the built and natural worlds. Downing also discussed innovations in technology as applied to buildings, including the installation of indoor plumbing. Thus, Downing may be credited with the widespread modernization of living environments. His plans, readily available through publication, became prototypes for suburban dwellings, copied and adapted throughout the country. Downing though concerned with the pastoral way of life also saw the importance of the new industrial building technology; powered by steam, the production of building components made standardized elements

DESIGN I.
A SUBURBAN COTTAGE.

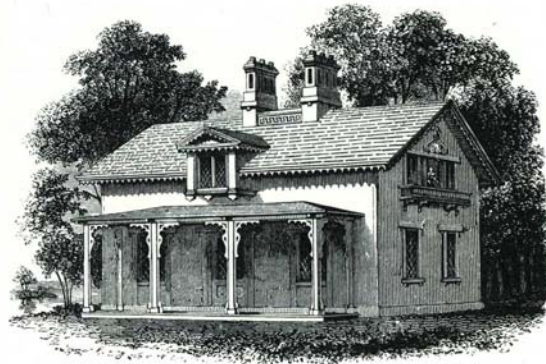


Fig. 3.

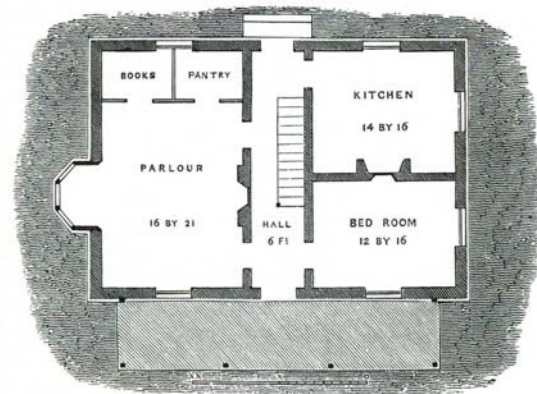


Fig. 4.

Figure 7. Illustration and plan for a “suburban cottage” (Downing 1873: between pp. 26–27).

and ornamentation abundant and inexpensive (Downing 1981).

Because of Jackson and Downing, the pattern book concept moved far beyond a simple how-to for builders. Now, pattern books not only offered site plans and illustrations of ornament, they also began offering a way of life. Perhaps more than anything, the contributions of both men offered a legacy of sorts more than 50 years later with the introduction of the kit house. Not only did the kit house manufacturing companies offer custom-

ized designs from a basic floorplan, they also promised the prospective house-buyer a house that was a true model for an ideal home life.

By the late nineteenth century, American architects and builders were awash in architectural pattern books. Publications such as A.J. Bicknell's *Specimen Book of One Hundred Architectural Designs, Showing Plans, Elevations and View of Suburban Houses, Villas, Seaside and Camp-Ground Cottages* (1878) showcased illustrations from 27 other pattern books. If a customer sought a particular plan or element, he could then order the entire pattern book for the design. Bicknell went on to publish several more pattern books showcasing specific building types such as dwellings, schoolhouses, and public buildings. Other pattern books by Samuel Sloan, William Comstock, George and Charles Palliser, and R.W. Shoppell also offered the craftsman and builder an even wider variety of architectural elements, house styles, and even garden plans to create the perfect setting for any house and almost any pocketbook (Reiff 2000).

THE "PORTABLE HOUSE"

In 1886, *The American Architect and Building News*, one of the leading architectural and building trades publication in the country, wrote to its readers: "The most frequently repeated of all the many questions which we receive—one which we have become weary of answering—is the inquiry where . . . portable buildings . . . are to be procured" (Reiff 2000:19). The magazine's complaint illustrated the new direction of the American pattern book: the development and construction of the portable house.

The idea of conveniently building a house with all materials furnished by a company first originated during the California Gold Rush during the late 1840s. Companies seeking housing for workers ordered plans and materials that were then shipped to their respective destinations where they were built. The practice carried over to the Civil

War and later to the construction of beach cottages during the latter years of the nineteenth century. Still, few companies were willing to take on the challenge; by the late nineteenth century, portable houses were sold only by two companies: The Portable House and Manufacturing Company and the Adjustable Building Company, both located in New York City. As the need for housing increased, both companies began advertising in one of the leading architectural and building publications of the period in the hopes of increasing exposure of their product and generating sales (Joselow 1989).

Besides selling plans and lumber, some companies saw another opportunity to make money by including prefabricated components such as fireplaces, windows, door frames, hardware, and staircases. With these new innovations in building, the immense leaps in technology and the mass production of building components, the dramatic growth of the lumber industry, and the introduction of mail-order catalogues, the time was right for consumers, builders, and companies to take advantage of this new trend in building.

MANUFACTURING THE AMERICAN DREAM

From the first years of the twentieth century until the advent of World War II, the demand for houses by catalogue dramatically rose in the United States. During the period 1883 until 1951, more than seventy-five companies offered fully illustrated catalogues featuring house plans. By far the most successful company of all was Sears and Roebuck, the nation's largest catalogue retailer. It is estimated that between the years 1908 and 1940, Sears sold over 100,000 kit-houses from their catalogues. Shipped by railroad cars, the kits included all the materials needed to build an exceptionally stylish and well-made house (Joselow 1989).

The origin of the company's Modern Homes program as it came to be called began in 1895, when Sears, already a retailing giant, expanded its

1895–1900	Sears begins selling building supplies from its catalogues.
1906	Because of poor sales, Sears considers closing the building supplies department; instead Frank W. Kushel is put in charge to turn the department's fortunes around. He realizes that by shipping directly from the factory, the company can bypass shipping costs.
1908	First specialty catalog issued for houses, <i>Book of Modern Homes and Building Plans</i> , features 22 home models ranging in price from 650–2500 dollars.
1909	Lumber mill purchased in Mansfield, Louisiana; the first of many lumber companies the company will operate.
1910	Gas and electric features are added to the catalogue designs.
1911	Company opens its Cairo, Illinois lumber mill; first mortgage loan issued with terms ranging from 5 to 15 years at 6 percent interest.
1912	Norwood, OH, millwork plant purchased
1917–21	The company offers the option of no-money down financing.
1918	The Standard Oil Company purchases 192 kit homes for company housing in the mining town of Carlinville, Illinois at the cost of approximately one million dollars. The town today still has many of the original homes.
1919	Modern Homes sales office opens in Akron, Ohio
1920	Company uses the Philadelphia plant as its East Coast base of operations; by now, Sears is shipping on average almost 125 kit homes a month
1921	Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton sales offices opened
1922	Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington sales offices opened; Honor Bilt homes now state of the art kitchens with white-tile sinks, drain boards and white enameled cupboards
1924	Columbus, OH, sales office opened
1925	Detroit sales office opened; newest lumber mill in Newark, New Jersey begins production.
1926	Cairo, Illinois plant ships 324 kit homes during the month of May.
1929	By now, the company has sold 49,000 kit homes. The company hits a new high of 12,050,000 in total sales; nearly half, however, are tied up in mortgage loans as the stock market crashes
1930	The company has 350 different sales people working in 48 kit house sales offices; the company now advertises itself as the "World's Largest Home Builders."
1933	Sears stops mortgage
1934	Modern Homes department discontinued, mortgage accounts liquidated to the sum of eleven million dollars. One high point is the appearance of a Sears Modern Home built with steel framing and featuring air-conditioning at the Century of Progress World's Fair in New York City.
1935	Modern Homes department resurrected; however customers can only buy homes with no financing offered; construction of prefabricated parts now handled by the company General Houses, Incorporated located in Chicago.
1936	Home sales reach 2 million dollars
1937	Home sales top \$3.5 million dollars; despite the earnings, the Modern Home Department is closed down.
1938	Sales reached 2.75 million dollars
1940	Last issue of <i>Book of Modern Homes</i> ; later that year, the company ends its Modern Homes program. By this time, the company has sold more than 100,000 kit homes.

Table 2. Chronology of Sears, Roebuck, and Company kit home business.

catalogue operations to include building materials (Table 1). Unfortunately, sales were poor and by 1906 the department was on the verge of being shut down. As a last ditch effort, the company reassigned Frank W. Kushel, manager of the china department, to try and turn around the division's fortunes. Kushel, after studying the accounts, realized that Sears was losing money by storing its materials after they were shipped from the factory. Cut out the storage, Kushel reasoned, ship the materials directly to their destination, and the company would save thousands of dollars. For the next 25 years, Kushel and the company enjoyed popular and profitable success with the creation of the Sears Modern Homes program (Sears Archive 2006).

In 1908, the company offered a new catalogue, the "Book of Modern Homes and Building Plans," which advertised the company's new line of building supplies. Included also were plans and instructions for 22 different house styles, all based on the popular house designs of the period including the American Foursquare and the bungalow. Three years later in 1911, realizing that one out of every four people in the country was a Sears customer, the company began including illustrations of house interiors with home furnishings, lighting, and hardware. Now for the first time, a potential homeowner could not only buy plans and building materials from the same company, but could find furnishings too (Figure 8).

The genius of the Sears company endeavor was not so much in the packaging of plan and materials, but in giving the potential client the opportunity to create a unique house plan. Each Sears design could be customized in numerous ways, including reversing floor plans, building with brick instead of wood, adding dormers and windows, and even moving the position of a fireplace. The finished product may have started as a catalogue illustration, but once built had the owner's own imprint. Within a few years, the company successfully embraced, marketed, and packaged the idea of a democratic architecture as outlined by Davis

and Downing. Indeed Sears houses could be built anywhere in the country, but the company also realized that for the formula to work individuality was the key to reaching the consumer.

But perhaps more important, the creation of the Sears Modern Homes program personified the very ideals of Sears, Roebuck and Company. In honoring the company philosophy of doing everything it could to better the standard of living for Americans no matter their background, race, or economic class, Sears maintained the enviable role of being a corporate citizen, while maintaining its profit margin.

For the next three decades, the Sears Modern Homes department created a new chapter in the history of American domestic architecture. Working with a group of company architects, the Modern Homes Department designed 447 different houses drawing upon the most popular housing styles of the period. These included several variations on the bungalow, including Stickley- and Craftsmen-style designs, as well as American Foursquare, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Dutch Colonial, and even a Spanish Mission-style Foursquare, "The Alhambra." The company also offered other diverse styles such as "The Magnolia," a colonial-styled mansion akin to the popular conception of the grand Southern plantation house, and "The Carlton" which, along with "The Aurora," bore the distinctive imprint of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie houses. The prices for the houses were as varied as the designs; a small bungalow dwelling such as "The Saranac" which sold for \$390 (approximately \$5,061 in 2005 dollars), and The Magnolia, priced at \$4,485 dollars (approximately \$55,200 in 2005 dollars) (Figures 9 and 10).

Sears made the process of buying from the company as simple as possible. First, the customer visited a local sales office in a large city like Chicago, Philadelphia, or Washington D.C. where a design was selected and, if necessary, financing was secured (Figure 11). Once the customer made his model selection order, he was assigned a service

The FULLERTON INTERIORS

Above—The architectural features of The Fullerton permit the use of any style of dining room furniture. The illustration shows how beautifully one style of furniture harmonizes with the dining room features.

Below—This ultra-modern kitchen is a treasure house of convenience to the housewife. See pages 110 and 111 for detailed description of the built-in cabinets.

Center—A spacious, well appointed living room is a source of constant pleasure to its owner. Here social gatherings enjoy a greater measure of hospitality, comfort and convenience. "The threshold of happiness and success is at the door of every man's home."
—HERBERT FRANZ

Above—Another view of the living room, showing the open stairway to the second floor, and the coat closet on the landing.

Below—A colorful bedroom of pleasing qualities.

P602


See Description of The Fullerton Home on opposite Page

Page 69

Figure 8. Catalogue page showing interior furnishings for Sears home (Sears, Roebuck and Co. [Sears] 1991:69).

THE SARANAC

*I*t is no longer necessary to pay an exorbitant price for a small home with a distinctive character. In our Saranac, we offer you a cottage that will look well in almost any community. The blinds secure the popular colonial effect, and the Fire-Chief Shingle Roll Roofing, sea green or dark red in color, which we guarantee for 15 years, looks like wood shingles stained or painted. The trellis gives the finishing artistic touch which will be fully brought out when the vines are in bloom.



Details and features: Five rooms and no bath. Front porch with concrete walls and shed roof; shutters on windows; trellis on front wall.

Years and catalog numbers: 1917 (C2030); 1918 (2030, 030); 1919 (2030, 030); 1921 (2030B, 030); 1922 (2030B, 030B)

Price: \$248 to \$927

Locations: East River, Conn.; Barrington, Ill.; Cannelton, Ind.; Thayer, Kans.; Amelia, Neb.

Figure 9. Catalogue page for Sears Saranac model, first offered 1917 (Stevenson and Jandl 1986:47).

representative and given a detailed construction manual. Arrangements were then made to have the kit house shipped. The house materials rarely arrived all at once; instead the parts were sent in staggered shipments as the customer moved along in the construction process (Sears 1991).

Keeping in mind that the company's customers came from different economic backgrounds, Sears also designed three different levels of building options. The first and second, the Simplex Sectional and the Standard Built, offered simple but sturdy plans, but did not feature pre-cut and fitted pieces. Instead, joists, rafters, and studs were more widely spaced, and there was no double studing such as that used for the more expensive building system, the Honor Bilt, which offered among other things, a no knots flooring (Figure 12). But no matter the building system, Sears guaranteed that only the best yellow pine or red cedar, oak, or maple wood was used for its framing, sid-

ings, and floors. The company catalogues also pointed out that the Standard Built houses were best for warmer climates, as they did not retain heat very well (Sears 2006).

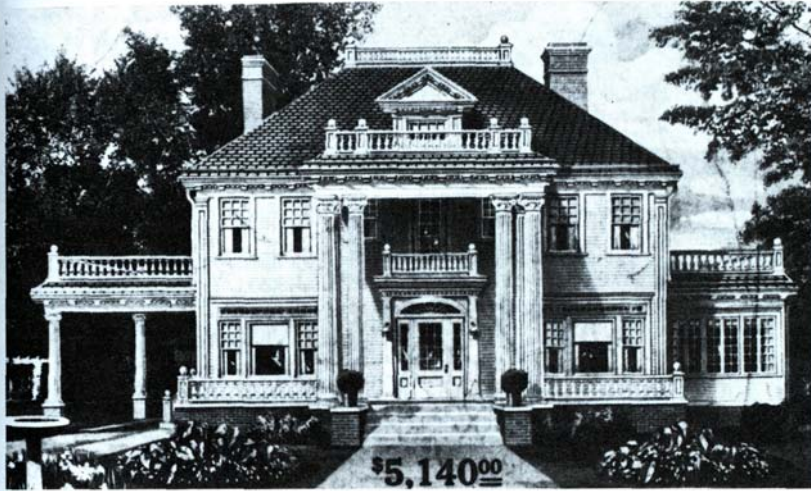
Part of the appeal of the new kit houses to the customer was not only the convenience of buying by catalogue and customizing the design, but the relatively low cost of building a Sears house. Because of new building technology, pre-cut parts and materials were manufactured at a lower cost that was in turn, passed on to the customer.

Assembling the house, whether done by the customer or with the help of a local builder was comparatively easy too. More than half of the house designs sold could be purchased as "Already Cut" or "Fitted," while others

were advertised as "not cut or fitted." The idea was a simple one; by purchasing models with fitted lumber, the customer was assured of "no waste-no mistakes-no big labor bills" (Sears Archive). While being cut at the factory, the lumber was carefully numbered helping the builder assemble the house quickly, and pieces such as the door and window surrounds were mitered; even the roof rafters were notched to fit over the top plate without too much trouble. In one instance, the company figured that by using fitted lumber to build the Sears model "The Rodessa" they were able to save more than 231 hours of labor and much material (Schweitzer and Davis 1990).

In addition, Sears's use of new building technologies such as "balloon style" framing, drywall, and asphalt shingles, all of which were cheaper, easier to install and in some cases safer also helped keep costs down for consumers. The company also included the latest amenities such as central heating,

THE MAGNOLIA



From the days of George Washington to the present time, the colonial type of residence has always been popular. It has housed the greatest figures in American history, science and literature. Many will recognize a close resemblance in the Magnolia to the famous residence at Cambridge, Mass., where the poet Longfellow composed his immortal works. Leading architectural authorities declare that this type will continue to win favor for hundreds of years. There can be no question of its imposing appearance, graceful lines and other attractive features.

Details and features: Eight rooms and two and a half baths. Two-story portico with fluted columns; open terrace across front; side porte-cochere; decks and sleeping porch off second-floor bedrooms; glazed front door with sidelights and arched transom. Fireplace and nook in living room; French doors off hall; open stairs.

Years and catalog numbers: 1918 (2089); 1921 (2089)

Price: \$5,140 to \$5,972



Reception hall



Living room

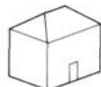


Figure 10. Catalogue page for Sears Magnolia model, first offered 1918 (Stevenson and Jandl 1986:285).

Use for Modern Homes Only

Your Next Step!

Please use the following blank lines to ask any questions you may have in mind that are not included in the Information Blank on the other side, or give us any other information you think we ought to know.

Lined area for user input.

EASY PAYMENT PLAN INFORMATION BLANK

If you are interested in our Easy Payment Plan (see page 144), please answer the following questions in addition to the ones on the other side of this page. We will then be glad to tell you just how our liberal terms will work out in your particular case.

- 1. Do you hold legal title to the lot or land on which you intend to build? Frontage? Depth?
2. How much did it cost? \$ How much paid? \$ Unpaid? \$
3. Street paved? Sidewalk? Water? Sewer? Gas? Electricity?
4. How much cash will you have to invest in the deal? \$ How much can you pay each month? \$
5. What is your occupation?
6. If you plan to do any part or all of the work yourself, then tell us what work you can do?

Sears, Roebuck and Co.—The World's Largest Store
CHICAGO—PHILADELPHIA—KANSAS CITY

Figure 11. Sears application for financing (Sears 1991:142).

Why Not Your Home ?

Frame Material Already Cut and Fitted
"Honor Bilt" Modern Homes
 Are Easy to Build

Every Piece Cut and Fitted Ready for Its Place

The illustrations on this page show, better than words can tell, exactly how we make it easy for you to save a great deal on the construction cost of your new home. For actual saving, see pages 10 and 11. Here is the most difficult part of the entire undertaking reduced to such a simple proposition that you only need a hammer and nails to put up the framework of your house.

Every piece of Ready-Cut lumber required to build the complete house is numbered. As the smallest pieces are bundled and marked no time will be lost in sorting. Every number corresponds with the number shown on the plans which we furnish.

Important Facts About Lumber

We do not handle inferior types of lumber. The lumber furnished for "Honor Bilt" Modern Homes is bright and new, fine, dry Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock for framing, Cypress for outside finish, the wood that lasts for centuries; Oak, Birch, Douglas Fir or Yellow Pine, as specified, of selected clear grades for interior finish. If we say we give you No. 1 quality Douglas Fir, **YOU ARE GOING TO GET NO. 1 QUALITY.** Our object in selling you an "Honor Bilt" Modern Home is to give you the kind of material that will prove to be **A LITTLE BETTER THAN YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT!**

Please don't lose sight of the fact that the price is not the only consideration when you select a house. The quality must be there, too. There must be enough material to build it complete according to our plans. It must be designed with a view to comfort and convenience as well as economy. It must be well lighted, well ventilated and provision must be made for safe and satisfactory heating. All of these things must be taken into account if you are going to be permanently satisfied with your purchase, **AND WE GUARANTEE TO SATISFY YOU PERFECTLY WHEN YOU BUY AN "HONOR BILT" HOME.** Read our guarantee on the back cover of this book.

Here Is Proof of Your Saving

Do you want to know what saving in labor you can make by the "Honor Bilt" Already Cut System?

A test made on August 2, 1921, showed a saving of 40 per cent or 231½ hours on a four-room house. All facts and figures with illustrations are given on pages 10 and 11.

With each house we furnish a booklet of simple directions.

Our Honor Bilt Ready Cut System The Sure Way to Reduce Building Costs

Figure 12. Sears "Honor-Bilt" home advertisement (Sears 1991:9).

indoor plumbing, and electricity, although not all houses were designed with these conveniences, particularly indoor plumbing.

Sales continued to peak until 1929 when the Depression hit the country. Even though the company posted profits of more than twelve million dollars, it was also saddled with more than 5.6 million dollars in mortgage loans, which in many cases were defaulted. Though the Modern Homes department rallied briefly in 1935, Sears now was selling only houses, not lots or financing. Clearly the hey-day of the Sears kit house had passed; in 1940 Sears printed its last *Book of Modern Homes* (Sears 2006).

ALADDIN HOMES: “BUILT IN A DAY”

Although Sears is often credited with inventing the mail-order kit house, it was in reality two brothers in the lumber town of Bay City, Michigan who engineered the concept in 1906, offering a house design with pre-cut, numbered pieces. The Aladdin Redi-Cut Homes Company was established in 1906 by William J. Sovereign, a lawyer, and his brother Otto E. Sovereign, a former newspaper reporter, editor, and advertising businessman. Their father, who had been in the lumber industry since 1870, had passed his business on to the sons. Their new company, originally named the North American Construction Company and later Aladdin, was one of three kit-house companies located in northern Michigan. Initially, the brothers were not so much interested in building houses as they were in manufacturing pre-cut boat kits. Eventually, they applied the concept to house construction (Erbes 1998). Starting with a small flyer in 1906, the company soon offered full color catalogues by 1916, recognized for their distinctive graphic designs and illustrations (Figure 13). Like Sears, the company offered close to 450 different models including bungalows as well as larger Craftsman, Foursquare, and Colonial Revival Styles (Figure 14).

The relationship between the company and customer did not necessarily end with the home's construction; Sears offered a wide variety of fur-

nishings, including suites of furniture, carpets, and appliances to make the home complete. According to some of the catalogue floor plan models, Sears even sketched in where and how furniture was to be placed. This situation also illustrates one of the prevailing Progressive doctrines of the early twentieth century. Sears' diagrams illustrating the placement of furniture and shaping other aspects of the decor extended into the home the spirit of the expert that, by the early 20th century, had become influential in public life. In the case of Sears, instruction in the design and furnishing of the home suggests that men and women needed the help and advice of experts in their private lives as well, since few seemed capable of mastering the intricacies of style and taste. In studying these and the accompanying illustrations of the home interiors, one also is able to see what constituted American middle-class tastes in interior design as well as early twentieth-century manners and mores.

For instance, in some models such as The Barrington (Figure 51), which carried a higher price tag, the master bedroom featured two beds—the more respectable arrangement for the American middle class—instead of just one bed as seen in the less expensive and smaller floor plan for The Starlight (Figure 33). In other floor plans, the master bedroom not only shows two beds, but a night table situated in between or in some cases, two bureau chests located at opposite ends of the room, showing a subtle illustration of “separate spheres” for each sex.

Comparing the daily living areas such as the living rooms and dining rooms also shows how different income levels could still furnish a house tastefully. In both plans for The Starlight and the pricier Alhambra model, a piano is shown in the living room. Other Sears models made socio-economic differences even plainer by illustrating a grand piano in one home plan and a smaller upright in another. Another difference seen was in the addition of the “library table,” which appeared in many house plans to appeal to a more prosperous upper middle-class clientele.

Even though the company was much smaller, it operated on many of the same principles as Sears. It also promised customers the best-quality lumber and other building materials. The company enjoyed great success; by 1917, the Aladdin Company had sold over 3200 houses with over five million dollars in sales. While cost was a consideration, many customers were drawn by the eye-catching designs. The company also relied on Otto Sovereign's clever ad campaigns which promised that all Aladdin houses were sold by "the Golden Rule," or were "built in a day," or one of the most popular slogans, the "Dollar a Knot" guarantee which promised any customer one dollar if they found any knot in the house's framing, siding, or flooring materials (Erbes 1998:47) (Figure 15).

IMPORTANCE OF THE KIT HOUSE

The importance of the kit house in the history of American architecture has been largely overlooked. Reprints of the early kit house catalogues from Sears, Aladdin, and other companies have recently quickened the desire to learn more about them. Yet, kit houses are the culmination of a movement that began with the early pattern books and continued with the work of Davis and Downing. Like the earlier efforts from which they grew, the kit houses of the twentieth century represent an attempt to create a democratic architecture. Because key elements of the kit houses were mass-produced and standardized, the houses were affordable. They thereby promoted the ideal of social equality, so central to the American experience. At the same time, the houses could be customized to suit individual tastes and budgets, and accommodate regional variations. Each house could be distinctive.

Like Sears, the Aladdin company practiced many of the same principles in marketing and selling its homes. Kits were shipped by train and included the precut wood framing members, paint, and nails. Aladdin, like Sears, did not provide masonry materials; that work was left for the customer to contract locally. The company also uti-

lized the popular building techniques of the day, including its own framing style known as "platform framing," which relied on two-inch thick lumber of varying widths to build the house. For instance, wall studs were measured and precut to approximate the height of the first story; in effect creating a "platform" for a subsequent story. Other elements of the Aladdin home were standardized as well, allowing the builder and owner to choose or replace components from another company. Like Sears, the company also recognized that by turning the "American dream" into a standardized, factory-made product, the rising costs of construction were bypassed. (Erbes 1998)

In this respect, the kit houses anticipated the on-demand consumer world in which we now live. Unlike much contemporary architecture, which tends to be conformist rather than democratic, kit houses admitted numerous variations on a theme. The same models were never meant to look exactly alike. This notion reflects a traditionally American political outlook and aesthetic sensibility: *E Pluribus Unum*—Out of Many, One. Kit houses also appealed to the pragmatic turn of the American mind, which admired efficiency and utility. Kit houses occupy an important, if overlooked, place in the social history of the United States. Their importance arises not only from their ability to transcend, or at least to mute, class and economic barriers. It is also the result of their ability to provide affordable housing for many persons and instill in them a pride of house ownership that is distinctly American.

REVIEW OF SOURCES FOR KIT HOUSE RESEARCH

The historiography of Sears homes in particular and of kit homes in general is scant. Over the last decade, there have been a number of recent articles in such publications such as *This Old House* and *American Bungalow*, as well as online which provide a look at a particular region or town with kit homes. A very general history of the Sears kit home

industry can be found in Rosemary F. Thornton's two popular books, *Finding The Houses That Sears Built* (2004) and *The Houses That Sears Built; Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Sears Catalog Homes* (2004). In addition, Thornton draws from her own collection of Sears catalogues to illustrate some of the more popular models the company built as well as providing tips on how to identify a Sears kit house. A more ambitious attempt at a field guide can be found with Katherine Cole Stevenson's and H. Ward Jandl's *Houses By Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company* (1986) which is a small compendium of almost all the models offered by the company from 1908 until 1940. But perhaps one of the best resources available is from the Sears Archives itself (<http://www.searsarchives.com>), which provides a good history of the Sears Modern Homes Division as well as a timeline and illustrations from many of the company's catalogues. In addition, publishers such as Dover have reprinted several of the Sears catalogues from the 1920s and 1930s that provide a good sense of how people used the catalogues when first issued.

In the case of the Aladdin Company, even fewer resources exist. Scott Erbes' (1998) article "Manufacturing and Marketing the American Bungalow: The Aladdin Company 1906–1920," found in Eleanor Thompson's *The American Home: Material Culture, Domestic Space, and Family Life* (1998) provides an overview of the company's beginnings and emergence as rival to Sears. Reprints of Aladdin catalogues are available, but are fewer in number. However, all the catalogues from the Aladdin Company can be found in their entirety

online at Central Michigan University's Clark Historical Library. However, there is no index and one must browse through the materials to find a particular model. Still, the collection is an impressive primary resource. But clearly, more work remains to be done in not only in studying the company, but its designs and history.

Over the last two decades, interest and scholarship on the history of kit homes has received more interest. Evie T. Joselow's 1989 unpublished dissertation "The Ideal Catalogue House: Mail Order Architecture and Consumer Culture, 1914–1930," provides an interesting look at the role of kit homes in the burgeoning "culture of consumption" during the early decades of the twentieth century. Two other publications discussing the role of kit houses in American architectural and cultural history can be found in Robert Schweitzer and Michael W. R. Davis' *America's Favorite Homes: Mail Order Catalogues As A Guide to Popular Early 20th-Century Houses* (1990) and Daniel D. Reiff's *Houses From Books: Treatises, Pattern Books and Catalogs in American Architecture, 1738–1950* (2000). Both books demonstrate exhaustive research in their analysis of kit house architecture and its relationship to the pattern book. Yet, like scholarship on specific companies, more serious study is needed to explore kit house architecture, its contribution to American social and cultural life, as well as the fascinating role it played against the larger backdrop of American architecture and its search for balance between modernity, the machine, and its relationship to the natural world.

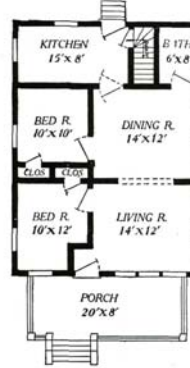


[Original title page]

Figure 13. Cover of Aladdin's 1917 catalogue (*The Aladdin Company 1995: frontispiece*).



The interior photograph at the top was taken from the front entrance. It shows a portion of the living room, the cased arch which separates the dining room shown to the left of the picture. At the bottom of the page views of the living room and dining room are shown.



Floor Plan—The Dresden

The daylight rooms are arranged on one side of the home and possess every desired feature—plenty of light and air, spaciousness and ease in accessibility; adapted to any arrangement or setting of furniture. Plenty of space in the bedrooms with good closets in each, makes a home that will give you great satisfaction and much convenience. Your friends will agree with your judgment in selecting this home of homes—the Dresden. All of the pictures shown in the Aladdin catalog are from photographs sent us of actual Aladdin homes erected in different parts of the country by our customers. This is true of practically no other catalog. The photographs show what you can do with Aladdin's Read-Cut System of Construction and Aladdin's Dollar-A-Knot lumber. See General Specifications, pages 12 and 13. Detail specifications for the Dresden will be sent on request. See Terms on page 2.

Exclusive Aladdin Advantages
 Originators of the Read-Cut System of Construction; Eight years longer in the business than any other concern; Dollar-A-Knot Guaranty; Highest Award at World's Fair; Customers in almost every community in the Country; Indorsed by Uncle Sam.

Figure 14. Catalogue page for Aladdin's 1917 Dresden model (*The Aladdin Company 1995:26*).

"I'll Pay \$1.00 for Every Knot"

any customer can find in our Red Cedar Siding shipped from Bay City. I stand ready to prove to you in this way that the lumber in Aladdin Read-Cut Houses is Higher in grade throughout than is regularly carried by any seller of lumber in America. Clear and Knotless Siding, Clear and Knotless Flooring, Clear and Knotless Interior Finish, Clear and Knotless Shingles, and Clear and Knotless Outside Finish, are furnished for every Aladdin Dwelling House. Every piece of exposed lumber on Aladdin houses in 1915 and 1916 was Clear and Knotless and will be *Clear and Knotless* in 1917. O. E. SOVEREIGN, Gen. Mgr., The Aladdin Company.

Aladdin's Famous "Dollar-A-Knot" Guaranty



A NEW standard of lumber quality has been given to the world by Aladdin's famous "Dollar-A-Knot" Guaranty.

The "Good-enough" lumber grades, the "Anything-will-do" grades and the multitudes of evasive substitutions for Clear Knotless lumber have been shown up.

You cannot be expected to fathom the intricacies of lumber associations' manual of grading rules; how many circles, hearts, rings and barks make a good log, nor how many knots, spots,

pitch pockets or worm holes there will be to a board.

There are none of these defects in your dollar, and there should be none in what you trade your dollar for.

Knotless Means Just What It Says

"A dollar a knot!" Could any guaranty be plainer, or more forceful, or more effective? You know a knot when you see it, and you know it makes a board less valuable. And when we guarantee Aladdin lumber to be knotless or guarantee "A Dollar-A-Knot" you *know* that your lumber is going to be the very *highest* grade taken from the forest.

"Hunting for Pieces"—Contractor

Of course, the Aladdin Read-Cut System receives adverse criticism from some contractors, lumber dealers, and others. This criticism comes chiefly from those who have had no experience with or knowledge of Aladdin houses. Self-interest, here prompted by loss of profit, begets the antagonism.

One of the most amusing remarks made is that the builder of an Aladdin house will lose as much time hunting out his material and finding the right piece as he will save by the Read-Cut System. Of course, this remark on the face of it is an admission that time is saved by the Aladdin System. However, any thought about time lost in hunting for pieces is immediately dispelled when you see the simple system of laying out materials that accompanies the instructions for every house.

About Freight

One of the big advantages in buying an Aladdin house is the big amount you save on the item of freight alone. Your local dealer very rarely buys his lumber from the forest. He gets it shipped to him from his wholesaler at some near-by distributing point. The wholesaler usually gets it from some other middleman, who gets it from the sawmill. Every time the lumber is moved in its zigzag course through the middlemen, the freight charges pile up and your local dealer must add them all into the price you pay. When *your Aladdin house* reaches you the freight is the very lowest that is possible to move the goods to your station. It reaches you in a straight line from the forest. We use great care in quoting the freight and great care in routing it the most direct way. It costs no more to pay the freight upon arrival of your car than to send us the money with which to prepay it.

Figure 15. Aladdin advertisement for knotless lumber (The Aladdin Company 1995:10).

4: Uniquely American: Popular Domestic Architectural Styles 1908–1940

The success of the mail-order kit houses rested in part on the shrewd observations of those architects, designers, and advertising experts at the Sears and Aladdin companies who determined what styles were most popular in the United States during the period 1908 until 1940. The styles that emerged during this period were a direct response to American architectural trends of the late nineteenth century. Architectural taste had run toward housing that was stylistically complex and often highly ornamented such as the Italianate and Queen Ann styles. In addition, houses of this period were distinguished by their irregular and complex roof-lines which often featured both gable and hipped roofs, asymmetrical arrangements of windows and doors, and complicated floor plans that required many hallways and stairways. These styles fit perfectly with the times: romantic, eccentric, and flamboyant.

By the turn of the century, architects and builders were turning away from the complex and ornate. The architectural styles of the previous decades as typified by the eclectic Queen Anne style, once the standard of middle-class respectability, were now seen as outdated, even backward for American families. The rejection of the high-style Neo-Classical buildings erected for the Chicago Exposition of 1893 played a large role in the public rejection of the Neo-Classical and European-influenced styles. Both American architects and the American public found the architecture imitative rather than celebrating the unique qualities of American architectural styles. However, the fair's landscaping design created by America's premier landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmstead, in-

fluenced hundreds of cities across the nation to hire urban planners to not only ensure sensible growth, but also to create beautiful buildings, parks, and urban spaces.

Coupled with this backlash was the growing trend for thousands of American families to move away from the large urban areas, now seen as unsuitable and unsafe for children. More and more families began moving to the rapidly emerging streetcar suburbs. With the advent of the automobile, suburban domestic architecture began to take on a new look with an emphasis on houses that were simpler, more economical and more modern. Over the next three decades, Americans were drawn to particular styles of housing that embodied new needs as well as embracing styles exhibiting a clear and distinct integration between structure, space, and nature.

THE AMERICAN FOURSQUARE

One architectural style that established itself as an American standard was the style known as the American Foursquare which offered a symmetrical square floor plan consisting of four square rooms on each floor. The overall shape then was that of a cube. The typical house, usually two or two-and-a-half-stories in height also featured a raised foundation, a hipped roof, with one or two dormers and a full-length porch supported by columns, although it was not uncommon for later Foursquare house porches to be supported by columns or posts resting some type of pedestal or pier (Figure 16)

The style overall was simple and spare in appearance; its shape made it easier to build houses

situated on narrow lots and the interior plan did away with any need for the long hallways or the odd rooms of its predecessors. The Foursquare was also less costly to build than the more ornate houses of the late nineteenth century. Because of the simplicity, cost, and form, the American Foursquare quickly emerged as a popular house form for kit catalogues (McAlester and McAlester 1982). Sears featured no less than 15 different styles of the Foursquare in its catalogues.

THE BUNGALOW

The bungalow may have started out as a lowly native dwelling in India called a *bangla*, but by the turn of the twentieth century it was one of the most popular and enduring architectural styles in the United States. The bungalow, perhaps more than any other twentieth century architectural style, helped more Americans realize their dream of home ownership. Before World War I, a small bungalow could be built for \$900, while larger bungalow models could cost as much as \$3,500.

These single-family houses also embodied the ideals of such architects as Frank Lloyd Wright and builders like Gustav Stickley who sought to integrate the natural with the man-made in order to achieve a balance between the two worlds. Bungalows built of wood, brick or stone, often set on small landscaped lots and with small gardens offered the American family an oasis of domestic tranquility while also promoting healthy living through modern technology (Figure 17).

The bungalow also reflected regional tastes with advent of the California bungalow and the Chicago Bungalow. The California Bungalow was most popular between 1900 and 1920. These homes were covered with clapboards or shingles, with broad, spreading eaves supported by multiple gables with projecting beams. Windows were small-paned or divided into a large lower pane and small upper panes. Also characteristic of this style are spacious front porches supported by squat posts

atop chunky river boulder and brick piers. Unlike the so-called Chicago bungalow which was characterized by masonry construction, few material details, offset entry-ways, and projecting bays on the facade, the California bungalow epitomized the essence of the California life-style and dream, where Americans could live in their own small piece of paradise complete with palm trees and tropical plantings (Erbes 1998).

The bungalow, like the American Foursquare, had a distinctive style all its own. The house was designed to place all the living space on one floor, or add a small half-story which might serve as an attic or an extra room. The design was both practical and economical; building a house on one level was far cheaper and simpler than building on two. The design eliminated the need for a staircase, another cost-cutting measure as well as making the house more attractive to elderly home buyers. There were other advantages too; the house's mechanicals and utilities could be more easily installed and the floor plan was deemed to make the house safer in the case of fire with easier escape through the first floor windows and doors. Other characteristics of the bungalow style included exposed rafters and support beams, tapered columns, paired or grouped windows, porches, and low-pitched roofs. The style became so popular that many cities had a "Bungalow Belt" of homes that were often clustered along streetcar lines as they extended into the suburbs. Bungalows were built in smaller groups than is typical today, often one to three at a time. The style soon became a staple in urban, suburban, and rural areas, as well as a popular pick in the kit house catalogues (Lancaster 1985).

THE COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE

Following on the heels of the American Centennial in 1876, a new architectural style emerged: the Colonial Revival. The style, which borrowed heavily from early American architecture, was a



Figure 16. Example of American Foursquare style (124-5107) in the Waterview area of Portsmouth.

response not only to a growing pride in the American past, but also reflected a growing interest in the budding historic preservation movement. Even though this style had its early beginnings during the late nineteenth century, Colonial Revival architecture remained a popular form throughout the early twentieth century (Figure 18).

The style drew from various early American and Colonial styles, combining Georgian and Federal period ornamentation with more contemporary elements. Although some houses demonstrated careful attention to stylistic details and proportions, other houses were exaggerated or out of proportion with the rest of the house. Typical plans included symmetrical facades, often with side porches; red brick or wood clapboard walls; entrances decorated with sidelights, transoms, columns, and pediments; and either hip or gable roofs, often with dormers. Other details found in the Colonial Revival style include dormers, centered entrances, dentil molding, fan lights, little or no cornice overhang, and various elements borrowed from the classical Greek and Roman architectural eras (McAlester and McAlester 1982).

TUDOR REVIVAL

In addition to the Colonial Revival style, other revival architectural styles also were popular. One of these, the Tudor Revival style drew its inspiration from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century English manor houses (Figure 19). The style was used almost exclusively for residential architecture. Tudor Revival houses were noted for their sprawling, picturesque plans and steeply pitched roofs. Contrast-

ing patterns of brick or stone were commonly used for building materials. Imitation medieval half-timbers in the form of wood strips applied to gables were common. Large bay windows, casement windows, and other ornamentation such as Tudor arches or segmental-shaped doors were also typical (Gottfried and Jennings 1988).

SPANISH REVIVAL

The Spanish Eclectic style was a more elaborate twist on the early Mission style and incorporated elements borrowed from a variety of other cultures, predominantly Spanish and Italian (Figure 20). The style, known for its exotic and almost fantasy-like appearance became extremely popular during the 1920s and early 1930s exotic. The style often started out as a boxy plan, not unlike the American Foursquare, and often had a low pitched roof covered with clay pantiles; stuccoed walls; arches over doors, porch entries, and windows; and decorative wrought iron railings (Gottfried and Jennings 1988).

ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

The emergence of these specific styles and the kit home movement were inspired by the more encompassing Arts and Crafts design movement.



*Figure 17. Example of Bungalow style (131-0055-0239)
in the South Norfolk Historic District of Chesapeake.*



*Figure 18. Example of Colonial Revival style (131-0055-0071)
in the South Norfolk Historic District of Chesapeake.*

While inspired by the European movement of the same name, the American Arts and Crafts became a significant cultural movement on its own. From 1900 to 1916, the movement sought to “reform” society through design mediums of all kinds, including architecture, furniture, metalwork, pottery, and textiles.

One distinctive aspect of the movements lay in the alternative interpretation of the relationship of man, nature, and the machine. The Arts and Crafts Movement began primarily as a search for a more meaningful artistic expression for the nineteenth century. It also was a reaction to the legacy of the “soulless” machine-made production introduced by the Industrial Revolution. Yet, many in the movement believed there was a place for machines in that they relieved the tedium of mundane, repetitive tasks. Another important belief of the movement was that people were improved by living in surroundings stripped of Victorian clutter and dishonest “revival styles” such as Elizabethan, Gothic, Rococo, and Neo-Classicism. At the same time, some Arts and Crafts leaders felt that objects could also be affordable. Thus began a lively debate on

how best to incorporate the natural elements of life within that of the man-made.

Architecture was one of the larger stages for the Arts and Crafts movement, especially that of the “Craftsman” architectural style. The design, which emphasized the enriching of the home and family, often used the bungalow plan to illustrate the movement’s principles. From the exotic pagoda-styled designs of the Greene and Greene bungalows in Pasadena to the kit home bungalows produced by Sears and Aladdin, there was a craftsman style house for every budget. The construction was honest, featuring few frills, a love of wood, and inspiration from nature. Pergolas, sleeping porches, and terraces helped erase the boundaries between the house and the garden surrounding it. Because the design of the house was to encourage a closely knit family, fireplaces and dining rooms were important features. A small room called an inglenook provided a retreat next to the fireplace where the family could gather. One promoter of bungalows wrote in 1911, “A bungalow without a fireplace would be almost as much an anomaly as a garden without flowers” (Kaplan 1987).



Figure 19. Example of Tudor Revival style (124-5096) on Grayson Avenue in Portsmouth.



Figure 20. Example of Spanish Revival style (122-0134) in Norfolk.

5: Survey Overview

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:

THE GROWTH OF THE SUBURBS

During the course of this project, the survey team identified various styles of kit houses manufactured by both the Sears and Aladdin companies and drew conclusions about the five areas in which these houses were located. Despite the differing histories of each city, the majority of kit houses are located within planned residential neighborhoods.

The development of what architectural historians called “entrepreneurial vernacular” subdivisions was vital to the original appeal of kit houses (Loeb 2001:3). The intent of such subdivisions was to create neighborhoods of single-family dwellings on landscaped lots. Sears even provided two saplings with every building kit. Houses faced the street, but had private yards and gardens in the rear. While house styles and landscaping preferences were changing and variable, the ideal of American house ownership was not. It was a widespread belief that every American deserved to live in a decent house located in a pleasant neighborhood, and the kit houses helped to make that dream possible.

Sears and Aladdin, the principal manufacturers of kit houses during the 1920s and 1930s, thus tried selling different pieces of the American Dream. Sears designs reflected the stability of middle America, while the Aladdin bungalows embodied the sense of renewal, regeneration, and opportunity that Americans had long associated with California and the West. As a consequence, kit houses helped break down regional distinctions in American vernacular architecture. In one sense, the kit

houses found in the neighborhoods of Portsmouth were no different than those of Virginia Beach, Suffolk, Norfolk, or Chesapeake. Nor were they any different from the houses built in Omaha, Los Angeles, or Chicago. Because the kit house industry strove to provide houses to accommodate every budget, kit houses also blurred economic and class lines. In any given neighborhood, a high-style design, such as the Sears Westly or the Mission-inspired Alhambra, could be located next door to a simple bungalow or four-square dwelling. Additionally, local builders who constructed kit houses or worked from kit house plans, incorporated some elements and excluded others, innovations that further varied the original design.

By the 1920s, suburban living was becoming more popular throughout the United States, prompted by a growing desire to escape the congestion, noise, traffic, and pollution of cities. The movement to the suburbs during the 1920s marked the continuation of a process that had been underway since the early nineteenth century, when innovations in transportation first made suburbs a viable alternative to both urban and country life. The development of the omnibus in the 1830s, the horse-car and railroad in the 1840s, the cable car in the 1870s, and the electric street car in the 1880s altered patterns of residential settlement, making it possible for more persons who worked in cities to relocate to the suburbs.

By 1895, 85 percent of street railways operating in the United States were electrified, opening hundreds of locations to suburban development. Beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century, the availability of inexpensive automobiles

such as the Ford Model-T enabled even more Americans to leave cities for the suburbs.

The state of Virginia also kept abreast of these new transportation technologies. The advent of the electric street car, first used in Richmond in 1888, only furthered this trend. Six years later, in 1894, electric street cars appeared in Norfolk, prompting the growth of suburban communities.

Cities throughout Virginia took part in the suburban expansion. Beginning in 1887, Norfolk grew from 1.3 to nine square miles. In 1887, for example, Norfolk annexed Brambleton, already an established residential community. Three years later, in 1890, Norfolk added Atlantic City, which unlike Brambleton, was not yet developed. City officials hoped to create new residential districts in Atlantic City to house the growing population of the city. After 1894, the areas most desirable for suburban development lay along the electric street car lines. Ghent was the first planned suburb of Norfolk. A 220-acre tract of rural land, Ghent was subdivided in 1890 by the Norfolk Company. Consisting of single-family houses designed primarily for middle-class residents, Ghent soon came to be encircled by other suburban districts that contained many kit houses, including Lafayette Residence Park (annexed 1902), Colonial Place (in 1903), and Winona (in 1909).

The popularity of kit houses was part of the housing boom that grew to accommodate the expanding suburbs. In 1925 1,048,000 housing units were constructed in the United States, most of them in the suburbs. During the 1920s, small bungalows ranged in price from \$3,000 to \$10,000, which made them affordable for members of the middle and working class. By comparison, kit houses were a bargain. In 1923, the Aladdin Company offered for sale a simple five-room frame house for \$538 and a more elaborate and larger 12-room Dutch Colonial model for \$1,932. Sears kit houses were comparably priced, though the Sears line boasted a few more expensive models. During the 1920s, Sears prices ranged from between \$500 and \$5,000.

A survey of the models of kit houses, the variations in their design, their locations, and the materials used in their construction reveals much about the social, economic, and architectural history of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

OVERVIEW

Of the 200 properties documented through reconnaissance survey, at least 12 models of Sears kit houses and one Aladdin model are represented (Table 2). A named Sears or Aladdin model could be positively identified for at least 28 properties, with representation in each of the five cities. Numerous other properties may be kit houses or copies of kit houses by local builders (Tables 3–7). The discussion below only includes models with fairly intact examples represented.

Many of the kit houses identified in this survey were located in neighborhoods that began as streetcar suburbs. Even those located in rural districts, however, underscore the popularity and availability. Mail-order catalogues both fed and satisfied the appetite for kit houses, and made it possible for people from many walks of life to afford to purchase one. Some buyers who lived in the country obviously preferred to live in what they considered a stylish and modern house rather than in an old-fashioned vernacular farmhouse.

Bungalows

Among the most popular kit house styles that both Sears and Aladdin offered was the bungalow; at one point Sears alone had more than 20 different bungalow designs in its catalogue. Bungalows came with a wide array of dimensions, floor plans, and patterns of ornamentation. Among the popular models identified in this survey were the Sears “Westly” and “Starlight,” and the Aladdin “Plaza.” In addition, the survey identified other bungalow styles, among them the “Airplane Bungalow” and the generic “California Bungalow,” the design of

DESIGN	CHESAPEAKE	NORFOLK	PORTSMOUTH	SUFFOLK	VIRGINIA BEACH
SEARS					
Alhambra		X	X		
Barrington					X
Crescent		X			X
Gladstone					X
Kilbourne			X		
Lebanon		X	X		
Lynnhaven			X		
Roanoke		X			
Starlight		X			
Sunbeam		X			
Walton		X			
Westly	X	X	X		X
ALADDIN					
Coronado					X
Maples					X
Marlboro			X		
Plaza		X	X		X
Pomona			X		
Sheffield		X			
Sheridan		X			
Victory	X				
Winthrop					X

Table 3. Representation of various house models among the five cities.

which drew extensively upon that used by the Aladdin Company for its kit houses.

THE KILBOURNE

This model, also designed by Sears, offered the most distinctive front porch among kit houses (Figure 21). A single example (124-5100) was identified during the survey, in the Westhaven area of Portsmouth (Figure 22). The exaggerated roof slope on the projecting gable front marks the front porch. This particular example is a one-and-a-half story, three-bay wide frame and vinyl single-family dwelling resting on a stretcher bond brick foundation. The gable-side roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has an engaged chimney with corbeled cap. The one-story, two bay, projecting gable-front porch roof is supported by paneled wood posts

resting on brick piers. The porch is now screened. The entrance door is single leaf wood paneled; window openings are 8/1 wood sash.

THE LEBANON

Another example of a two-story bungalow dwelling was the Lebanon model, manufactured by Sears. Examples were found in the Parkview Historic District of Portsmouth (124-0055-0083) and the Park Place Historic District of Norfolk (122-5087-0531) (Figures 23–25). Both are quite small and appear to follow the original plan with three rooms on the first floor and two bedrooms and a bath on the second floor. The Norfolk house is now a rental property undergoing a renovation during which much of the original material will be lost. However, on the front facade, there is still

NUMBER	ADDRESS	STYLE	MODEL	DATE	SEARS	ALADDIN	OTHER
SOUTH NORFOLK HISTORIC DISTRICT							
131-0055-0046	918 Butt	Bungalow	Westly	1925	X		
131-0055-0066	1124 Chesapeake	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0071	1138 Chesapeake	Colonial Revival		1933			X
131-0055-0078	1209 Chesapeake	Bungalow		1925			X
131-0055-0136	1437-1439 Chesapeake	Other	Unident.*	1925		X	
131-0055-0139	1446 Chesapeake	Bungalow		1925			X
131-0055-0176	712 D	Other		1930			X
131-0055-0184	904 D	Bungalow		1930			X
131-0055-0215	1132 Decatur	Bungalow	Plaza	1915		X	
131-0055-0222	1218 Decatur	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0225	1226 Decatur	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0227	1230 Decatur	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0228	1235 Decatur	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0229	1236 Decatur	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0239	1323 Decatur	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0240	1324 Decatur	Bungalow		1915			X
131-0055-0241	1327 Decatur	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0242	1331 Decatur	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0249	1425 Decatur	Bungalow		1925			X
131-0055-0377	1234 Jackson	Bungalow		1918			X
131-0055-0431	1202 Jefferson	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0451	1030 Ohio	Bungalow		1915			X
131-0055-0482	1020 Park	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0536	1004 Rodgers	Bungalow	Unident.	1925	X		
131-0055-0570	1301 Rodgers	Bungalow	Unident.	1920		X	
131-0055-0572	1313 Rodgers	Bungalow	Unident.	1925	X		
131-0055-0575	1317 Rodgers	Bungalow	Unident.	1920	X		
131-0055-0577	1321 Rodgers	Bungalow		1920			X
131-0055-0579	1325 Rodgers	Bungalow		1921			X
131-0055-0735	1314 Stewart	Bungalow		1925			X
OTHER AREAS							
131-0450	3113 Old Mill	Bungalow	Unident.	1925	X		
131-0491	212 Geo Wash Hwy	Bungalow	Unident.	1925	X		
131-0492	208 Geo Wash Hwy	Bungalow		1920			X
131-5353	808 Stewart	Bungalow	Unident.	1920		X	
131-5354**	809 Stewart	Bungalow	Victory	1925		X	
131-5355	612 Happy Acres	Bungalow	Sunbeam	1930	X		

** = property also surveyed at intensive level

Table 4. Summary of properties surveyed in Chesapeake.

NUMBER	ADDRESS	STYLE	MODEL	DATE	SEARS	ALADDIN	OTHER
COLONIAL PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT							
122-0134	272 E 39th	Spanish Mission		1925			X
122-0527	725 Virginia	Bungalow		1910			X
122-0823-0052	257 E 40th	Bungalow		1915			X
122-0823-0054	261 E 40th	Bungalow		1921			X
122-0823-0055	263 E 40 th	Bungalow	Unident.	1918		X	
122-0823-0056	265 E 40th	Bungalow		1914			X
122-0825-0195	612 Connecticut	Bungalow	Unident.	1928		X	
122-0825-0197	616 Connecticut	Bungalow	Unident.	1921		X	
122-0825-0198	617 Connecticut	Foursquare		1918			X
122-0825-0200	620 Connecticut	Bungalow	Plaza	1918		X	
122-0825-1000	722 Virginia	Bungalow		1920			X
LAFAYETTE HISTORIC DISTRICT							
122-0826-0007	1332 Lafayette	Bungalow	Plaza	1920		X	
122-0826-0043	172 Orleans	Bungalow		1918			X
122-0826-0175	1610 Lasalle	Bungalow		1921			X
WINONA HISTORIC DISTRICT							
122-0828-0017	1420 Ashland Cir	Foursquare		1920			X
122-0828-0024	1460 Ashland Cir	Bungalow		1917			X
122-0828-0037	1528 Ashland Ave	Bungalow		1923			X
122-0828-0042	1535 Ashland Ave	Bungalow		1919			X
122-0828-0043	1531 Ashland Ave	Bungalow		1923			X
122-0828-0044	1529 Ashland Ave	Bungalow		1923			X
122-0828-0045	1525 Ashland Ave	Bungalow		1925		X	
122-0828-0048	1509 Ashland	Foursquare	Alhambra	1916	X		
122-0828-0054	1455 Ashland Cir	Foursquare		1921			X
122-0828-0055	1451 Ashland Cir	Bungalow	Sheffield	1920		X	
122-0828-0056	1447 Ashland Cir	Foursquare		1922			X
122-0828-0057	1443 Ashland Cir	Bungalow	Plaza	1921		X	
122-0828-0150	1623 Ashland Ave	Colonial Revival		1920			X

Table 5 (part 1 of 2). Summary of properties surveyed in Norfolk.

NUMBER	ADDRESS	STYLE	MODEL	DATE	SEARS	ALADDIN	OTHER
ADJACENT TO WINONA HISTORIC DISTRICT							
122-5380	1644 Columbia	Other		1925			X
PARK PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT							
122-5087-0531	811 W 28th	Bungalow	Lebanon	1919	X		
LAFAYETTE ANNEX							
122-5372	2804 Argonne	Bungalow	Starlight	1919	X		
122-5373	1733 Pope	Bungalow		1925			X
122-5374	1735 Pope	Bungalow		1925			X
WEST GHENT							
122-5375	913 Gates	Bungalow		1925			X
122-5376	917 Gates	Bungalow		1920			X
122-5377	924 Gates	Bungalow	Unident.	1925		X	
122-5378**	812 Brandon	Bungalow	Unident.	1925		X	
LAMBERTS POINT							
122-5379**	1435 42 nd	Bungalow	Plaza	1918		X	
122-5383**	813 52 nd	Bungalow	Roanoke	1920	X		
EDGEWATER							
122-5381	1225 Magnolia	Bungalow	Plaza	1920		X	
LARCHMONT							
122-5382	6308 Richmond Pl	Colonial Revival	Crescent	1921	X		

** = property also surveyed at intensive level

Table 5 (part 2 of 2). Summary of properties surveyed in Norfolk.

NUMBER	ADDRESS	STYLE	MODEL	DATE	SEARS	ALADDIN	OTHER
CRADOCK HISTORIC DISTRICT							
124-0037-0002	122 Afton	Four Square	Alhambra	1919	X		
124-0037-0003	21 Gillis	Tudor Revival		1925			X
HIGHLAND-BILTMORE							
124-5090	121 Edison	Bungalow		1920			X
124-5091	209 Edison	Bungalow		1920			X
PRENTIS PARK							
124-5092	2004 Parker	Bungalow		1922			X
124-5093	1916 Parker	Four Square		1919			X
124-5094	1815 Atlanta	Bungalow		1920			X
WATERVIEW							
124-5095	3919 High	Colonial Revival	Marlboro	1930		X	
124-5096	135 Grayson	Tudor Revival	Lynnhaven	1930	X		
124-5097	134 Grayson	Colonial Revival		1930			X
124-5099	501 Shenandoah	Bungalow		1925			X
124-5098	434 Shenandoah	Bungalow		1920			X
124-5101	603 Shenandoah	Foursquare		1928			X
124-5100	533 Shenandoah	Bungalow	Kilbourne	1930	X		
WESTHAVEN							
124-5103	4619 King	Bungalow		1920			X
124-5102	4605 King	Bungalow		1925			X
124-5104	4322 King	Bungalow		1927			X
124-5105	4416 King	Bungalow	Unident.	1926	X		
124-5106**	4423 King	Bungalow	Westly	1924	X		
124-5107	4522 Columbia	Foursquare		1920			X
124-5108	4523 Columbia	Bungalow	Pomona	1927		X	

** = property also surveyed at intensive level

Table 6 (part 1 of 2). Summary of properties surveyed in Portsmouth.

NUMBER	ADDRESS	STYLE	MODEL	DATE	SEARS	ALADDIN	OTHER
PARK VIEW HISTORIC DISTRICT							
124-0055-0083	219 Elm	Bungalow	Lebanon	1926	X		
124-0055-0085	223 Elm	Foursqaure		1920			X
PARKVIEW							
124-5110	1626 Barron	Bungalow		1920			X
124-5111	1619 McDaniel	Bungalow		1925			X
124-5112	1623 McDaniel	Bungalow		1920			X
124-5113	1626 McDaniel	Bungalow		1920			X
124-5114	1630 McDaniel	Bungalow		1925			X
124-5115	1516 County	Foursquare	Alhambra	1915	X		
124-5116	1508 Ward	Bungalow		1915			X
124-5117	1512 Ward	Bungalow		1915			X
124-5118	1514 Ward	Bungalow		1915			X
124-5119	1518 Ward	Bungalow		1915			X
124-5120	1524 Ward	Bungalow		1910			X
124-5123	1513 McDaniel	Bungalow	Unid.	1915		X	
SHEA TERRACE							
124-5121	242 Idlewood	Bungalow		1910			X
124-5122	248 Idlewood	Bungalow		1915			X
OTHER AREAS							
124-0099	1701 Charleston						
124-5047	1145 Blair	Bungalow		1925			X
124-5069	1511 Charleston	Bungalow		1920			X
124-5109	3522 County	Bungalow		1915			X

Table 6 (part 2 of 2). Summary of properties surveyed in Portsmouth.

NUMBER	ADDRESS	STYLE	MODEL	DATE	SEARS	ALADDIN	OTHER
SUFFOLK HISTORIC DISTRICT							
133-0072-0091	1 College Ct	Bungalow		1915			X
133-0072-0092	2 College Ct	Bungalow		1915			X
133-0072-0093	3 College Ct	Bungalow		1913			X
133-0072-0094	4 College Ct	Bungalow		1915			X
133-0072-0095	5 College Ct	Bungalow		1913			X
133-0072-0096	7 College Ct	Bungalow		1915			X
133-0072-0145	310 N. Main	Bungalow		1919			X
133-0072-0162	118 Oakdale	Bungalow		1920			X
133-0072-0163	119 Oakdale	Bungalow		1925			X
133-0072-0164	121 Oakdale	Bungalow		1925			X
133-0072-0166	125 Oakdale	Tudor Revival		1920			X
133-0072-0168	129 Oakdale	Colonial Revival		1930			X
WEST END HISTORIC DISTRICT							
133-5040-0023	103 Brewer	Bungalow		1925			X
133-5040-0026**	109 Brewer	Bungalow		1930			X
133-5040-0033	123 Brewer	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5040-0047	134 Brewer	Bungalow		1927			X
133-5040-0051	116 Brewer	Bungalow		1915			X
133-5040-0053**	108 Brewer	Bungalow	Westly	1925	X		
133-5040-0119**	118 S. Broad	Bungalow		1917			X
133-5250	536 Second	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5251	538 Second	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5252	539 Second	Bungalow		1910			X
HALL PLACE							
133-5244-0001	217 Cedar	Foursquare		1920			X
133-5244-0002	219 Cedar	Bungalow		1925			X
133-5244-0003	224 Cedar	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5244-0004	223 Cedar	Foursquare		1920			X
133-5244-0005	333 Cedar	Bungalow		1918		X	
133-5244-0006	311 Cedar	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5244-0007	314 Cedar	Foursquare		1925			X
133-5244-0008	315 Cedar	Bungalow		1925			X
133-5244-0009	319 Cedar	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5244-0010	322 Cedar	Bungalow		1930			X
133-5244-0011	323 Cedar	Bungalow		1925			X
133-5244-0012	324 Cedar	Bungalow		1925			X
133-5244-0013	328 Cedar	Foursquare		1920			X
133-5244-0014	329 Cedar	Bungalow		1925			X
133-5244-0015	330 Cedar	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5244-0016	331 Cedar	Colonial Revival		1920			X
133-5244-0017	336 Cedar	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5244-0018	321 Cedar	Bungalow		1920			X
133-5244-0019	317 Cedar	Foursquare		1920			X
OTHER AREAS							
133-5253	218 Nansemond	Dutch Colonial		1925			X

** = property also surveyed at intensive level

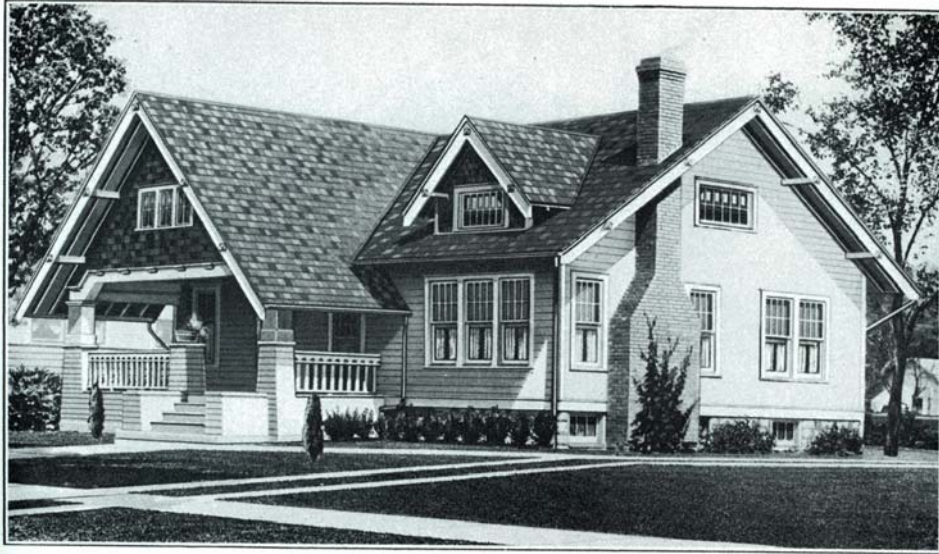
Table 7 Summary of properties surveyed in Suffolk.

NUMBER	ADDRESS	STYLE	MODEL	DATE	SEARS	ALADDIN	OTHER
OCEANA							
134-0519	1613 VB Blvd	Bungalow		1925			X
134-0521	225 Louisa	Bungalow	Maples	1919		X	
134-0522	232 Louisa	Foursquare		1915			X
134-0545	213 Louisa	Bungalow		1920			X
134-0574	316 Louisa	Bungalow		1920			X
134-0575	314 Louisa	Foursquare		1918			X
134-5095	129 Louisa	Bungalow		1920			X
134-5096	217 Louisa	Colonial Revival		1900			X
134-5097	233 Louisa	Bungalow	Unid.	1923		X	
134-5098	1621 Ohio	Bungalow		1918			X
134-5099	1601 VB Blvd	Bungalow	Coronado	1925		X	
134-5100	1605 VB Blvd	Foursquare		1920			X
134-5101**	1621 VB Blvd	Bungalow	Unid.	1920		X	
134-5102	1617 Michigan	Bungalow	Unid.	1920	X		
134-0649	201 Louisa	Bungalow		1925			X
134-0650	205 Louisa	Bungalow		1920			X
PUNGO							
134-0411	1636 Princess Anne	Bungalow	Unid.	1920		X	
134-0666	1785 Princess Anne	Bungalow	Unid.	1918		X	
134-5091	1505 Princess Anne	Bungalow		1925			X
134-5092	1740 Princess Anne	Bungalow	Unid.	1925		X	
134-5093	1789 Princess Anne	Bungalow	Unid.	1925		X	
134-5094	2013 Indian River	Bungalow		1915			X
LONDON BRIDGE							
134-0561	109 London Bridge	Bungalow	Plaza	1920		X	
134-0949	2305 Potters	Bungalow	Plaza	1920		X	
134-0951	101 Fair Lady	Bungalow		1925			X
134-5112	101 London Bridge	Bungalow		1925			X
LAKE SHORES							
134-0433	419 16th	Foursquare		1925			X
OTHER AREAS							
134-0494	317 S 24th	Bungalow		1920			X
134-5103	936 Lindsley	Bungalow		1930			X
134-5104**	5084 School Rd.	Bungalow	Winthrop	1915		X	
134-5105	1411 Cypress	Bungalow		1920			X
134-5106	401 22nd	Bungalow		1915			X
134-5107	404 22nd	Bungalow		1920			X
134-5108	415 22nd	Tudor Revival	Barrington	1928	X		
134-5109	113 53rd	Tudor Revival	Barrington	1930	X		
134-5110	411 16th	Tudor Revival	Barrington	1927	X		
134-5111	5210 Atlantic	Foursquare	Gladstone	1925	X		

** = property also surveyed at intensive level

Table 8. Summary of properties surveyed in Virginia Beach.

FIVE OR EIGHT ROOMS AND BATH



A CUSTOMER who built The Kilbourne bungalow recently wrote us as follows: "Our house has been the object of much admiration, not only from our friends, but strangers, who in passing will stop to look at the artistic front. Many have remarked about the 'homey' porch. We have no hesitancy whatever in recommending Sears-Roebuck lumber, which came in plenty of time, and in splendid condition. Also must thank you for the courteous treatment and helpful suggestions you have given us. We know we saved nothing less than \$1,500.00."

The Kilbourne bungalow satisfies every family that has built it. Judge for yourself! The photograph and floor plan reproduced on this page shows the reason why The Kilbourne is such an outstanding value. See its sloping roof, the dormer, the overhanging eaves, the fireplace chimney, the large porch and the massive porch pillars!

The Living Room. Size, 21 feet by 13 feet 2 inches. Interest is centered on the fireplace and mantel, at each side of which is a window. There are three additional windows overlooking the front lawn. The large size of this room allows for a pleasing arrangement of furnishings.

The Dining Room. French doors connect the living room and dining room. Floor size of the dining room, 12 feet 10 inches by 13 feet 8 inches, just the right size for the modern home. A double side window and two high sash windows provide light and air.

The Kitchen. From the dining room a swinging door opens into the kitchen. Size of kitchen, 12 feet 3 inches by 10 feet 4 inches. It has a built-in cabinet, Nos. P9260 and P9261 shown on pages 110 and 111. space for sink, range, table and chairs. A double window affords light and ventilation.

In one corner of the kitchen there are five shelves, and on the opposite side a door opens to stairway leading down to the basement. At another end a door opens to the rear entry, which has space for a refrigerator, and door to grade stairs.

The Bedrooms. A hall connects the living room, the kitchen, the two bedrooms, the bathroom, and the hall coat closet. The front bedroom, 14 feet 8 inches by 10 feet 8 inches, has a big combination wardrobe, No. P9265, as illustrated on pages 110 and 111. Two front windows and one side window provide light and cross current of air. The rear bedroom, 12 feet by 9 feet 8 inches, has a clothes closet, and a window on each outer wall.

The Bathroom has a built-in medicine case.

The Basement. Room for furnace, laundry and storage.

Height of Ceilings. First floor, 9 feet from floor to ceiling. Basement, 7 feet from floor to joists.

What Our Price Includes

- At the price quoted we will furnish all the material to build this five-room bungalow, consisting of:
- Lumber; Lath;
- Roofing, Best Grade Clear Red Cedar Shingles;
- Siding, Clear Cypress or Clear Red Cedar, Bevel;
- Best Grade of Clear Red Cedar Shingles on Porch Gable Wall;
- Framing Lumber, No. 1 Quality Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
- Flooring, Clear Oak and Maple;
- Porch Flooring, Clear Edge Grain Fir;
- Porch Ceiling, Clear Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
- Finishing Lumber;
- High Grade Millwork (see pages 110 and 111);
- Interior Doors, Two-Panel Design of Douglas Fir;
- Trim, Beautiful Grain Douglas Fir or Yellow Pine;
- Windows, California Clear White Pine;
- Medicine Case; Wardrobe;
- Kitchen Cabinet; Brick Mantel;
- Eaves Trough and Down Spouts;

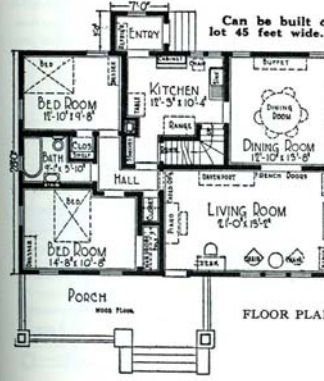
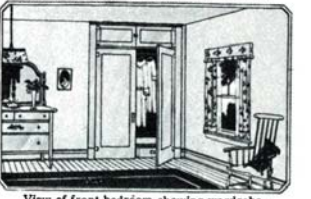
Honor Bill

The Kilbourne
No. P17013 "Already Cut" and Fitted
\$2,700⁰⁰



40-Lb. Building Paper; Sash Weights; Chicago Brass Hardware (see page 132); Paint for Three Coats outside Trim and Siding; Stain for Two Brush Coats for Shingles on Porch Gable Wall; Shellac and Varnish for Interior Trim and Doors; Shellac, Paste Filler and Floor Varnish for Oak and Maple Floors. Complete Plans and Specifications. We guarantee enough material to build this house. Price does not include cement, brick or plaster. See description of "Honor Bill" Houses on pages 12 and 13.

- OPTIONS**
- Furnished with three rooms in attic, with single floor, \$300.00 extra. See attic plan above.
 - Sheet Plaster and Plaster Finish to take the place of wood lath, first floor, \$182.00 extra; for first floor and attic, \$293.00 extra. See page 109.
 - Oriental Asphalt Shingles, guaranteed 17 years, instead of wood shingles, \$57.00 extra.
 - Oak Doors and Trim for living room and dining room, \$84.00 extra.
 - Storm Doors and Windows, \$73.00 extra; with attic, \$100.00 extra.
 - Screen Doors and Windows, galvanized wire, \$46.00 extra; with attic, \$63.00 extra.
- For prices of Plumbing, Heating, Wiring, Electric Fixtures and Shades see pages 130 and 131.



For Our Easy Payment Plan See Page 144

SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

P602

Page 79

Figure 21. Catalogue page for Sears Kilbourne model, first offered in 1921 (Sears 1991:79).



Figure 22. Sears Kilbourne model (124-5100) in the Waterview area of Portsmouth.

FOR THE SKILLED LABORER

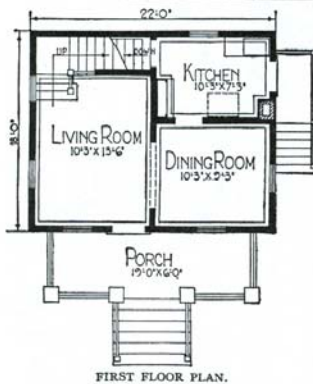


The LEBANON

Honor Bill

\$1,092⁰⁰

No. 3029 "Already Cut" and Fitted.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN.

At the above price we will furnish all the material to build this five-room house, consisting of lumber, lath, roofing, mill work, flooring, porch ceiling, siding, finishing lumber, building paper, sash trough, down spout, sash weights, hardware and painting material. We guarantee enough material to build this house. Price does not include cement, brick or plaster.

THIS graceful and nicely arranged house is becoming quite popular with industrial concerns. It solves the house problem where it is desired to retain skilled labor.

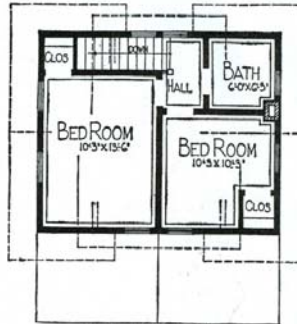
First Floor From the porch a glazed door leads into the living room, which has an open stairway to the second floor. A cased opening leads into the

dining room and a swinging door into the kitchen, furnished with a convenient pantry case. From the kitchen a stairway leads to the basement. There is a side door leading to the kitchen from the outside, so that it may be entered without passing through the other rooms.

Second Floor A stairway from the living room leads to two well arranged and good size bedrooms, both of which have closets. A bathroom is also located on this floor.

We furnish our best "Quality Guaranteed" mill work, described on pages 120 and 121. Interior doors are five-cross panel, with trim and flooring to match, all yellow pine, in beautiful grain and color. Windows are made of clear California white pine, with good quality glass set in with best grade of putty.

"Honor Bill" Construction Explained on Page 9.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN.

Built on a concrete block foundation and excavated under entire house. We furnish clear cypress siding and extra heavy Fire-Chief Roofing, framing lumber of No. 1 quality yellow pine.

Height of Ceilings Basement, 7 feet from floor to joists, with concrete floor. First floor, 9 feet from floor to ceiling. Second floor, 8 feet 3 inches from floor to ceiling.

Paint for two coats outside, your choice of color. Varnish and wood filler for interior finish. Stratford Design hardware, see page 129.

OPTIONS

Sheet Plaster and Plaster Finish to take the place of wood lath, \$67.00 extra.

This house can be built on a lot 30 feet wide.

IF ESTIMATES and SPECIFICATIONS for plumbing, hot water, steam or warm air heating systems, electric wiring material, gas or electric fixtures are desired, write for them, mentioning the Lebanon Modern Home No. 3029 in your request.

Our Guarantee Protects You—Order Your House From This Book
Price Includes Plans and Specifications.

Figure 23. Catalogue page for Sears Lebanon model, first offered in 1918 (Craven 2006).



*Figure 24. Sears Lebanon model (122-5087-5031)
in Norfolk's Park Place Historic District.*



*Figure 25. Sears Lebanon model (124-0055-0083)
in Portsmouth's Park View Historic District.*

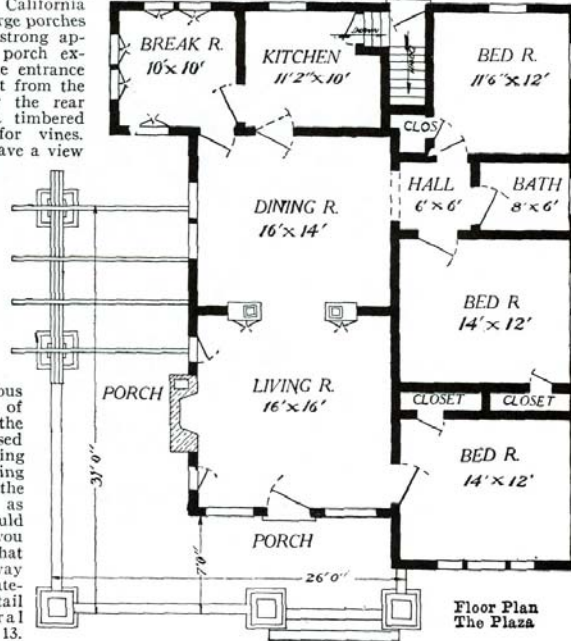


The Plaza \$1,499.10

THIS magnificent bungalow secures inspiration from one of the best known bungalows in Pasadena, California. An interesting effect is secured by the treatment of gables composing the roof. This is

Price, \$1,578.00
Cash discount, 5%
Net price, \$1,499.10

highly typical of the true California bungalow. To the lover of large porches the Plaza has an especially strong appeal. The front section of porch extends twenty-six feet from the entrance to the left, and thirty-one feet from the front along the side. Over the rear section of the side porch a timbered pergola gives opportunity for vines. Entering the front door you have a view through the living room and dining room for thirty feet. Just off the dining room, and with direct entrance to the kitchen, is a dainty breakfast room. This room can, of course, be used as a den or sewing room, at the owner's discretion. Grade cellar entrance from the kitchen, three fine bedrooms, bath and closets complete this splendid floor plan arrangement. A true craftsman front door, and our famous Arch A-1 illustrated in back of catalog are included in the price. This arch may be used as bookcases, facing the living room, or china closets facing the dining room. Owners of the Plaza are delighted with it, as you cannot fail to be should you select it. It will save you from \$400 to \$900 under what could be built by the old way of building, with inferior materials. Send for complete detail specifications. See General Specifications, page 12 and 13.



Floor Plan
The Plaza



Figure 26. Catalogue page for Aladdin Plaza model, first offered in 1917. (The Aladdin Company 1995:29)



*Figure 27. Aladdin Plaza model (122-0826-0007)
in Norfolk's Lafayette Historic District.*



*Figure 28. Aladdin Plaza model (122-0828-0057)
in Norfolk's Winona Historic District.*



Figure 29. Aladdin Plaza model (134-0411) in the Pungo area of Virginia Beach.



Figure 30. Aladdin Plaza model (134-5092) in the Pungo area of Virginia Beach.



Figure 31. Aladdin Plaza model (134-0666 [Pungo Bar & Grill] in the Pungo area of Virginia Beach.



Figure 32. Aladdin Plaza model (134-5093) in the Pungo area of Virginia Beach.

evidence of where the original flower box was attached.

THE PLAZA

Sold by Aladdin, the Plaza was touted as the true California bungalow (Figure 26). Two examples of this model were identified in the Lafayette and Winona historic districts of Norfolk (122-0826-0007 and 122-0828-0057) and four in the Pungo area of Virginia Beach 134-0411, 134-5092, 134-0666 [Pungo Bar & Grill], and 134-5093) (Figures 27–32). The house on Ashland Avenue in the Winona Historic District is a one-and-a-half-story, frame-and-wood shingle single family-dwelling that rests on a raised stretcher bond brick foundation (see Figure 28). The complex roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has a simple wide wood frieze, exposed double purlins, one interior brick flue, and one interior brick chimney with corbelled cap. The overhanging eaves are beaded board with boxed rafter tails. A moulded water table encircles the dwelling. The one-story wrap around porch is now enclosed and supported by square columns on brick piers. The entrance door is wood double leaf paneled with multiple lights. Window openings consist of 6/1, 9/1, and 12/1 wood sashes.

Among the more interesting discoveries of the survey was a group of Plaza bungalows in the Pungo area of Virginia Beach (see Figures 29–32). Most were intact with their original cladding materials and porch elements. According to the owner of the Pungo Bar and Grill, the dwelling that now houses the restaurant was built by Enoch Capp in 1918. In partnership with another local businessman, Caps opened the Munden General Store, where they sold Aladdin Kit House catalogues. It is believed that Capp's own house and the catalogues that he sold inspired others in the area to purchase the same model.

Another example of the Plaza model in the Lambert's Point area of Norfolk was surveyed at the intensive level. This one-story, three-bay, frame and weatherboard single-family dwelling (122-5379) rests on a raised stretcher bond foundation

(Figure 33). The complex roof is covered with asphalt shingle with overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, one interior brick flue, and one exterior engaged brick chimney with corbeled cap and one stepped shoulder. Slightly flared wood square posts resting on brick piers connected by a simple wood balustrade support the one-story wraparound shed roof porch. The original side entrance door to the house has been boarded up. The off-center entrance door is wood paneled; window openings consist of single, paired, and tripled 4/1 wood sashes.

The floor plan of this house is the reverse of the floor plan for the model shown in the catalogue. The house had also undergone significant alterations before the current owners bought the property in 1994. Since then, the owners have worked to restore as much of the original structure as possible. They have cleaned and restored the original fireplace and the tile surround, which the previous owners painted silver. The original wood floors have been replaced because they were damaged beyond repair; most of the walls have been replastered. A doorway that connected the first and second bedroom has been plastered over; plans are underway, however, to uncover the original entrance. The bathroom has much of its original white tile; there is still evidence of where the toilet tank hung. Interior measurements of the house are true to those in the catalogue plans. The original side entrance, which was boarded up, will eventually be opened again. The original chimney is in good condition; the owners will be replacing the deteriorating weatherboard and will repaint the house. Much of the house's original hardware is intact.

The house was built in 1918 for the Russell family. During the Great Depression, the house was sold to Chine and Queenie Hunter. The Hunters remained in the house until the death of Mr. Hunter; the house was then sold to a local college fraternity. During the time the structure was used as a fraternity house, it underwent significant cosmetic and structural changes. The property went into foreclosure and was held by the United Com-



Figure 33. Aladdin Plaza model (122-5379) in the Lambert's Point area of Norfolk.

panies Lending Corporation of Louisiana. In 1994, the property was again sold, this time to Michael and Mark B. Rodenhouse. In 2004, the current owners, Darrell and Lisa Darrow, acquired the house. At the time, the property was in such poor condition that the Darrows purchased it for \$60,000.

THE STARLIGHT

Only one example of the Sears “Starlight” model was identified during the survey (Figure 34). Located in the Lafayette Annex area of Norfolk, the house (122-5372) appeared to be in good condition, although the original cladding material is now covered with vinyl siding (Figure 35). The porch elements, however, remained intact. The house is now a rental property. In many ways, the Starlight is a variation of the bungalow/dormer style, which is among the most prominent bungalow designs in the United States.

THE WESTLY

As depicted in the 1928 Sears Modern Houses Catalog, the Westly was an imposing two-story weatherboard and shingle dwelling (Figure 36). One of the focal points of the house was the gable-front dormer, which included a single leaf door leading out to a small porch. The house was also noted for its paired and tripled columns, and the short rear roof slope. Originally, the first story was covered with cypress siding with overlapping cedar shingles on the second story.

Although maintaining the original footprint, the Westly located in the South Norfolk Historic District (131-055-0046) in Chesapeake is now covered with stucco (Figure 37). In addition, the windows and front entrance have been changed, while some of the original window openings on the second floor have been covered over. In Suffolk’s West End Historic District, the Westly model at 108 Brewer Avenue, though covered with vinyl siding, has maintained both the original footprint and porch ornamentation (Figure 38).

FIVE ROOMS, BATH AND PORCH



THE STARLIGHT bungalow is one of our most popular designs. It is dignified and substantial in every detail. Architects and builders say the Starlight has as good an arrangement, considering its size, as it is possible to have. It has the proper number of rooms for the average family. The careful planning, together with our direct-from-factory prices, gives the utmost for the money spent. More than seven hundred have been built.

The main exterior features of this home are the hip roof which extends over the entire house and porch, the dormer, and the porch with its large columns and porch rail. Here in the Starlight you can enjoy comfort in every room, and on a warm day the shady porch bids you welcome for rest, as there is room for hammock, swing and other porch furniture. The porch is 24 feet by 6 feet, and can be glazed or screened in, making it practicable the twelve months in the year.

Honor Bill

The Starlight

\$1,424.00 No. P3202 (Without Bathroom)
"Already Cut" and Fitted.

\$1,542.00 No. P7009 (With Bathroom)
"Already Cut" and Fitted.

The Living Room. A three-light door opens into the living room. Size, 12 feet 8 inches by 10 feet 1 inch. There is enough wall space for piano, davenport and other furniture. Two windows and glazed door provide plenty of light and fresh air.

The Dining Room. From the living room a cased opening leads into the dining room. This arrangement makes it possible to use the two rooms as one, if occasion requires it. Size of dining room, 12 feet 8 inches by 10 feet 8 inches. A double window provides an abundance of light and ventilation.

The Kitchen. A swinging door from dining room leads to the kitchen. Size, 12 feet 8 inches by 9 feet 2 inches. The location for sink, range, table and chairs, has been planned with a view toward helping the housewife reduce needless steps. The kitchen has a shelved pantry in No. P3202 lighted by a window. Kitchen of No. P7009 has a closet with shelf and a pantry. Two windows keep the kitchen bright and well aired. A door leads to rear entry, which has space for ice box, steps to grade and basement. This arrangement permits entrance to basement without going outside.

The Bedrooms. There are two bedrooms. The front bedroom opens from the living room. It has a clothes closet and two windows. From the dining room through a cased opening into a small hall, the rear bedroom and bathroom are reached. The rear bedroom, too, has a clothes closet and two windows.

The bathroom has a medicine case, and is lighted by a window.

Basement. Excavated basement under entire house. Room for furnace, laundry and storage.

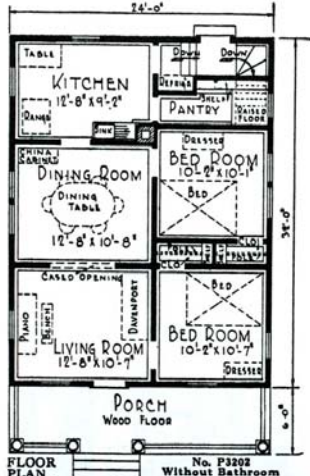
Height of Ceilings. Main floor, 9 feet from floor to ceiling. Basement, 7 feet from concrete floor to joists.

What Our Prices Include

At the prices quoted we will furnish all material to build this five-room bungalow consisting of:

- Lumber; Lath;
- Roofing, Best Grade Clear Red Cedar Shingles;
- Siding, Clear Grade Cypress or Clear Red Cedar, Bevel;
- Framing Lumber, No. 1 Quality Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
- Flooring, Clear Grade Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
- Porch Flooring, Clear Grade Edge Grain Fir;
- Porch Ceiling, Clear Grade Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
- Finishing Lumber;
- High Grade Millwork (see pages 110 and 111);
- Interior Doors, Five Cross Panel Design of Douglas Fir;
- Trim, Beautiful Grain Douglas Fir or Yellow Pine;
- Windows of California Clear White Pine;
- Medicine Case for No. P7009;
- Eaves Trough and Down Spout;
- 40-lb. Building Paper; Sash Weights;
- Stratford Design Hardware (see page 132);
- Paint for Three Coats Outside Trim and Siding;
- Sashes and Varnish for Interior Doors and Trim.

Complete Plans and Specifications.



FLOOR PLAN No. P3202 Without Bathroom



FLOOR PLAN No. P7009 With Bathroom

We guarantee enough material to build this house. Prices do not include cement, brick or plaster. See description of "Honor Bill" Houses on pages 12 and 13.

For prices of Plumbing, Heating, Wiring, Electric Fixtures and Shades see pages 130 and 131.

- OPTIONS**
- Sheet Plaster and Plaster Finish, to take the place of wood lath, \$137.00 extra for No. P7009 and \$130.00 extra for No. P3202. See page 109.
 - Oriental Asphalt Shingles, instead of wood shingles, \$35.00 extra for No. P7009 and \$33.00 for No. P3202.
 - Oak Doors, Trim and Floors in living and dining room. Maple Floors in kitchen and bathroom, \$109.00 extra for No. P7009 and \$110.00 for No. P3202.
 - Storm Doors and Windows, \$53.00 extra for No. P7009 and \$49.00 for No. P3202.
 - Screen Doors and Windows, galvanized wire, \$35.00 extra for No. P7009 and \$32.00 extra for No. P3202.

For Our Easy Payment Plan See Page 144

Figure 34. Catalogue page for Sears Starlight model, first offered in 1913 (Sears 1991:24).



Figure 35. Sears Starlight model (122-5372) in the Lafayette Annex area of Norfolk.

THE WESTLY



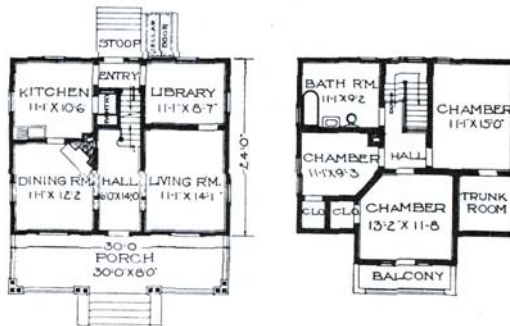
This two-story bungalow is built on a concrete block foundation and is sided with narrow beveled clear cypress siding. All rooms on both floors are light and airy.

Details and features: Seven rooms and one bath. Shed dormer opening onto balcony; full-width front porch supported by brick and wood piers; exposed roof rafter tails and knee braces; front door with beveled plate glass. Colonnaded openings off hall; corner fireplace in dining room with oak mantel.

Years and catalog numbers: 1913 (206); 1916 (264P206); 1917 (C206, C2026); 1918 (2026); 1921 (2026, 3085); 1922 (12026, 13085); 1925 (13085); 1926 (P13085); 1928 (P13085); 1929 (P13085)

Price: \$926 to \$2,543

Locations: Washington, D.C.; Aurora, Ill.; Gary, Ind.; Milford, Iowa; Boston, Mass.; Ord, Neb.; Vine-land, N.J.; Fort Covington, N.Y.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Sioux Falls, S.D.; McLean, Va.; Parkersburg, W.Va.; Kenosha, Wis.



No. 144



Similar to: No. 144

Differences: Dormer and porch design modifications

Years and catalog numbers: 1911 (144); 1912 (144); 1913 (144)

Price: \$829 to \$926

Figure 36. Catalogue page for Sears Westly model, first offered in 1913 (Sears 1991:75).



Figure 37. Sears Westly model (131-055-0046) in Chesapeake's South Norfolk Historic District.



Figure 38. Sears Westly model (133-5040-0053) in Suffolk's West End Historic District.

The best example (124-5106) of the Westly design identified in this survey is located in the Waterview area of Portsmouth (Figure 39). Now a rental property, the frame and weatherboard house located at 4423 King Street has retained all of its original exterior features, including the signature five-piece brackets, a speciality found only on Sears kit houses (Figure 40). Although the house shows signs of deterioration, it warranted a second look. On the follow-up visit to conduct an intensive survey, it was noted that the house's interior floor plan was relatively intact, but was reversed from the catalogue design (see Figure 36). Measurements of the rooms showed little variance from the plans. The original fireplace was still intact. Built-in book cabinets located between the living room and what had been a music room had been removed. Other alterations and modifications to the house included a rear addition that contained three rooms, consisting of a large room possibly used as a bedroom and two bathrooms, and a second story rear bedroom addition. On the second floor, the original rear window has been plastered over. Remnants of the dwelling's original bathroom wallpaper were found in the upstairs bathroom.

The house, which had been a rental property, is currently in foreclosure; the tenant did not know the name of the owner. At this time, the owner of the property remains unknown, though research is being conducted to determine ownership.

One variation on the Westly plan was found in Portsmouth at 1145 Blair Street (124-5047) (Figure 41). This two story frame-and-vinyl single-family dwelling has a projecting hipped roof dormer in which the roof overhang is supported by wood posts; two windows look out onto a small area similar to the second-story porch on the Westly.

This two-story, three bay, frame and German siding, single-family dwelling with cornerboards rests on a stretcher bond brick foundation. The gable-side roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has overhanging eaves, notched rafter tails and bargeboard, three piece brackets, and an interior brick

chimney with corbelled cap. The front slope of the roof is noticeably longer than the rear. One of the focal points on the facade is the gable-front inset dormer with a small wood six-light door flanked by 6/1 sash windows; the floor of the small area measuring approximately 6 by 4 feet suggests that the area may have been used as a sleeping porch. The dormer roof has overhanging eaves with brackets; a simple bargeboard, a small simple square, fluted wood balustrade is connected to small piers located at either end. The one-story, three bay porch is supported by paired and triple fluted wood posts with exposed purlins resting on brick piers with granite caps and connected to a simple wood balustrade. The porch ceiling is beaded board; the floor's decking appears to be original as well. The slightly off-center entrance door is single-leaf wood with a large single light and one light transom; window openings consist of 6/1 wood sash. Attached to the rear is a new one-story frame and German-sided gable-side roof addition.

Many of the home's features are still intact including the original oak floors, the window and doors and their surrounds, the staircase, and the unusually intricate baseboard moldings which reveal the leanings of the original owner toward Colonial Revival styling.

However, like the Portsmouth model, this floorplan has also been reversed. The entrance door opens onto a small foyer area. To the right (north) and passing through a pair of built-in bookcases with small columnettes is the living room area. Located on the west wall is a large brick fireplace constructed of stretcher bond brick; the mantel has a heavy marble top. Located on either side of the mantel are graduated brick piers; the fireplace overall is a heavy and somewhat overpowering feature of the room. The location of the fireplace too partially blocks the built-on bookcase directly opposite it. While the hearth opening is original, it appears that at some point the fireplace was reconstructed or rebuilt. A small entrance door to the north of the fireplace leads into what was called



Figure 39. Sears Westly model (124-5106) in the Waterview area of Portsmouth.



Figure 40. Detail of roof brackets on Sears Westly model (124-5106) in the Waterview area of Portsmouth.

the “music” room or what could have been used as an extra room. A doorway on the south wall leads to the small pantry and cellar entrance hall; what was once the rear door now opens onto the new frame addition. The home’s dining room located to the west of the small foyer contains the original pocket French windows. On the west wall is an entrance that originally led to the kitchen but which has now been completely gutted.

The second floor is accessed by a staircase located on the west wall of the foyer. The staircase consists of a simple carved newel post with a paneled and denticular cornice; a simple wood balustrade leads to a first floor landing where there is a 6/1 wood sash window. Another set of steps leads to the second floor hall area where three bedrooms and a bath are located. On the north wall of the landing is the original fuse box with a glass front door. The original bathroom has been gutted. On either side of the hall are two bedrooms; the north bedroom features a small fireplace mantel, and the hearth has been boarded over. Located toward the front east of the floor is the main bedroom with a small closet; located on the east wall are the small

door and two windows which open onto the front dormer porch area.

The 108 Brewer Avenue property is a good example of the Sears kit house model “The Westly.” The home is recorded as being built in 1917. An early forerunner of the Westly model was “No. 144” which offered a similar floor plan and dormer but with different porch modifications. The model went on to become one of the company’s most popular offerings. The home featured seven rooms and a bath and was priced anywhere from \$926 dollars to \$2543, depending on customization and extra features. The model was one of many different types of bungalow-style homes that the company offered. With its unique dormer and porch detailing, this particular model is more distinctive than many of the other Sears kit homes. The home is located in the West Suffolk Historic District neighborhood where other kit homes have been located. However, unlike its counterpart in Portsmouth, this home is an interesting example of how a model could be customized. Clearly the home’s original owner had some



Figure 41. Sears Westly model (124-5047) 1145 Blair Street in Portsmouth.

means and favored the Colonial Revival style as seen in the home's details such as the newel post and baseboard mouldings. The porch too is a bit more ornate than the simple one found in Portsmouth. However, unlike, the Portsmouth Westly, this model does not offer the spacious and open feeling in part because of the additional walls and built-ins which make the home feel a bit more cramped.

THE ROANOKE

One example of the Sears Roanoke model was identified in the Lambert's Point area of Norfolk (Figures 42 and 43). This two-story, three bay, frame, shingle and German-sided, single-family dwelling rests on a raised stuccoed foundation. Encircling the lower bottom of the house is a wide wood water table; delineating the first story and the shingle covered second story is a wood string course. The second story's overlapping shingles flare slightly at towards the bottom of the story. The gable-front roof is covered with asphalt shingle, has overhanging eaves with beaded board undersides, boxed rafter tails, notched bargeboards, and the Sears kit house signature five-piece brackets; small rectangular louvered vents are located in each gable end. A central brick interior chimney with metal cap is located on the roof ridge; towards the rear is an interior brick flue. A one-story, three bay shed roof porch has exposed rafter tails and purlins, and is supported by square wood replacement posts, connected by the original wood balustrade. The porch ceiling is beaded board; the porch decking has been replaced. The slightly off-center entrance door is wood paneled with multiple lights; window openings consist of 1/1 replacement sash windows. Attached to the rear of the house is a one-story, one bay, shed roof porch.

In general the home's interior, like the exterior still has much of its original fabric left. All of the interior red oak floors are intact as are the interior picture mouldings, door and window surrounds as well as baseboard mouldings. Smaller details

such as the wire clothing hooks in the closets are also in place. Some of the original Sears hardware for the doors remains, the rest has been replaced with pieces dating from the period of the home's construction in 1921. The owner has redone the bathroom and updated the kitchen; but the room's footprints are intact.

The front entrance door leads directly to a rectangular shaped living room area; the focal point of the room is the impressive brick fireplace located across from the entrance door. Measuring a little over five feet and almost six feet wide, the fireplace features a segmental arch over the hearth area and at one time many have featured a pull chain damper. The original hearth tile floor is still intact; the mantle top has been replaced. To the west is an opening which leads to the dining room; in the original Roanoke plan the area consisted of a "Reception Hall," and a dining room area, but the original owner instead opted for a larger dining room space. Located to the west of the dining room is a small kitchen; an entrance to the north leads to a small pantry area and the door to the basement. The original stove flue opening can still be seen on the kitchen's south wall. Leading to the second floor is a stairway with its original chamfered newel post and simple wood balustrade which stops at a small landing with a 1/1 window; a short flight of stairs leads to the second floor hall way. Off to the left from the hall is a small corner bedroom that has been paneled and which has a small closet; in the south corner is evidence where the flue stack had been placed between the walls of the first and second bedrooms. To the west of the first bedroom is another corner bedroom, again with a small closet located on the north wall. The bathroom is found along the west side of the second floor landing; the former owner redid this room by knocking out a closet wall from the master bedroom to expand the bath; the current owner has replaced the original window with a simple stained glass sash window. Facing the north is the large master bedroom, which could according to the catalogue be broken down into

two smaller bedrooms. As with the downstairs, the rooms are filled with plenty of natural light and air through the placement of various window openings.

813 West 52nd Street was built in 1921; according to the current owner, the 1921 Sanborn map shows both the house and its garage. The home at one point served as a rental property with the current owner purchasing the home in 2000. Not knowing initially the home was a Sears kit home, some alterations to the exterior of the house were made, particularly with the porch. However, since learning that the home was a Sears home, the owner has shown a great deal of sensitivity and knowledge about the home's origins, plan and history.

813 West 52nd Street is an interesting example of the Sears home model "The Roanoke," but also

owes some debt to an even earlier Sears house plan, known simply as "No. 226," as well as the later model known as "The Salem." The differences in the plan of this home illustrate the manner in which Sears customers could customize their floor plans according to desire and need. In this case, a side entrance door has been replaced by a triple row of windows in the dining room. The small area known as the "Reception Hall" was done away with, giving the first floor a more open, and spacious looking appearance. This home also borrowed from the early model the "No. 226" which offered seven rooms with a bath as opposed to the Roanoke model with six rooms and a bath plan. Although there is no clear-cut style for the Roanoke model, it tends to fall into the category of the Sears Colonial Revival models as evidenced by its original porch and interior detailing.

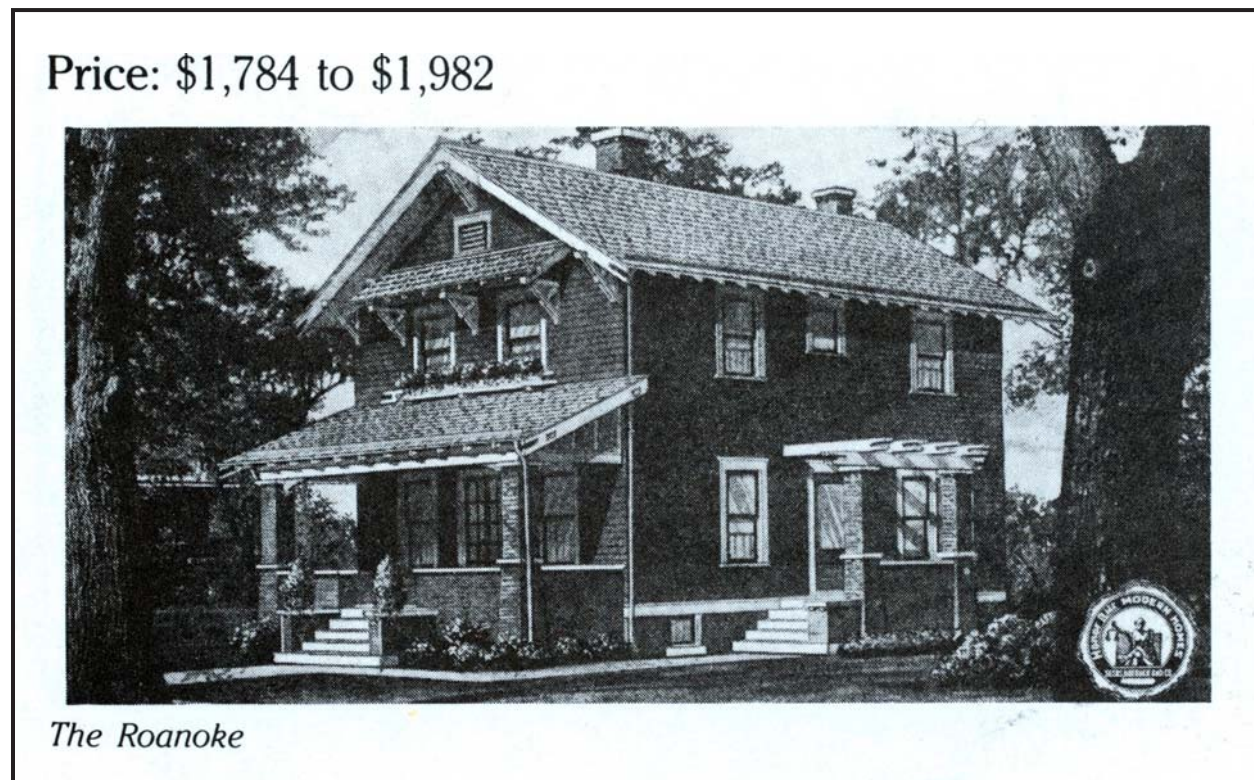


Figure 42. Catalogue page for Sears Roanoke model, first offered in 1921 (Stevenson and Jandl 1986:66).



Figure 43. Sears Roanoke model (122-5383) 813 52nd Street in Lamberts Point, Norfolk.

THE WINTHROP

An example of this model was identified in Virginia Beach (Figures 44 and 45). This one-story, three bay, frame and wood shingled single-family dwelling, rests on a parged foundation; underneath is a foundation constructed of alternate courses of 3 and 7-course American bond brick. A moulded wood water table encircles the building. The complex roof line is covered with asphalt shingles, has simple bargeboards, beaded board overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and three piece brackets constructed of three separate pieces of wood with chamfered ends. Located on the east roof slope is an engaged parapeted, shouldered brick chimney with a cement cap; located to the rear is a corbelled brick interior flue. A one-story, one bay projecting gable-front roof projection with four 9/1 windows on the front west wall and narrow 9/1 windows on the north and south wall of the bay is located on the west wall. A one-story, one bay, modern pressure-treated wood stoop marks the off-center entrance wood paneled door with a single light. Window openings consist of 6/1 and 9/1 wood sash with moulded wood surrounds, which have a slight flare at the bottom. A pair of double doors at the west wall foundation leads to a cellar. In inspecting the cellar, evidence was found of the original foundation which has now been covered with concrete (see above) and of the sturdy brick piers used to support the house overall.

Alterations and additions include the enclosing of the original three bay front porch and a one-story rear addition which was once a rear porch but has now been enclosed for a laundry room. The rear entrance to the house is marked by a semi-circular small brick area leading to a set of brick steps laid in alternate patterns of stretchers and headers. Attached to the west wall is a modern wood deck constructed pressure treated wood.

In general, the home has retained the overall floor plan found in the 1908 Aladdin catalogue for the home model "The Winthrop." The over-

all floor plan which covered approximately 1250 square feet consisted of a living room, dining room, two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bath. (The home's square footage today is closer to 1450 square feet with the enclosing of the front and rear porches.) The home's original oak floors are intact; the original plaster walls have been covered with a plaster substitute and are painted with colors that reflect the color palette of the Arts and Crafts period. All the incised five panel wood doors are original to the house. All the windows with the exception of the front windows which are new replacement are original to the house; both doors and windows still have their original moulded surrounds, as do the baseboards.

Entry into the house leads to the living room area; the initial entrance measuring 14 feet by 8 feet was once the original front porch but which was later enclosed and made part of the living room by the second owner. In both the east and west corners of the north wall are remnants of the original porch post and brick pier. The living room which measures 10 feet by 21 feet is a large open space; the original fireplace is located on the east wall; constructed of stretcher bond brick with a row of soldier brick directly above the fireplace opening. The fireplace top consists of parapeted, graduated rows of brick with a solid mantle top. New wood crown moulding has been added. A large open entrance with moulded wood surround leads into the dining room. Measuring approximately 11 feet by 14 feet, the room is set off by the slightly projecting bay located on the west wall. This room also shows evidence of one of the original floor outlets found throughout the house. The room now serves as an office.

A door located on the west wall leads to a small bedroom with beaded moulded window surrounds; perhaps the most interesting feature of the room is the noticeable absence of a closet. Just beyond the dining room is a small foyer that leads to the modern bathroom, the second bedroom and the kitchen. The second bedroom is notable for



The Winthrop

See prices on inside of front cover.

CAN you imagine this bungalow nestling among trees and shrubbery on your own lot? A few cobblestones are gathered from nearby fields and when blended with brown stained shingles, natural shrubbery and a setting of velvety green, the observer is fascinated.

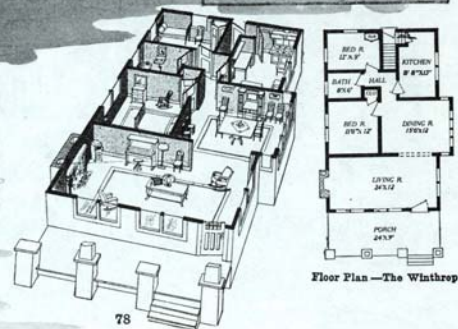
A bungalow should always be set close to the ground. When local conditions seem to make this impossible, the same results can be secured by terracing close to the building.

The Winthrop is of the pure bungalow type—low, a touch of rough stones, bracketed eave supports, heavy timber work, shingles, and broken outlines.

And as the real bungalow is always compactly and

conveniently arranged inside—you will agree that the Winthrop is typical. The large living room is lighted by three group windows and the fireplace at the end forms an inviting nook. Extra length is secured to the dining room by the interesting bay window. Lots of wall space is available in the front bedroom. The centralized hall, and entrance from dining room, kitchen, bath and bedroom is a good feature. Could a bathroom be better located than this? Can you help falling in love with this interesting bungalow?

For price of the Winthrop refer to inside of front cover. See General Specifications on pages 12 and 13. Detail Specifications for the Winthrop will be sent on request. See Terms on page 2. Masonry is not included.



77

78

Figure 44. Catalogue page for Aladdin Winthrop model, first offered in 1919 (American Life Foundation and Study Institute 1985:77).



Figure 45. Aladdin Winthrop model on School Road in Virginia Beach.

its small inset window seat on the far south wall; the room's ceiling has undergone some renovation with the addition of some new crown moulding.. The foyer entrance to the east leads to the small kitchen. Although the room has undergone renovation to bring it more up to date, the owner has kept the original built-in cabinets on the north wall which consist of a small china cabinet with paired 8-light windows; underneath is a small pantry area with paired solid doors. The other cabinet has a small cupboard and pantry area; between the two is a small counter space. The original kitchen windows also have small chamfered corners at the bottom. Located on the east wall is a new kitchen door entrance which leads to the modern deck. The original porch has been enclosed with modern glass sliding doors leading to the rear yard.

The 5084 School Street property is an excellent example of the Aladdin Company's "The Winthrop." First offered in 1908, the model was one of the many popular home plans offered by the company. The home sold for \$1,049 (approximately \$22,000 in 2005 values); if paid in cash, the buyer received a 5 percent discount bringing the final price to \$996.95 (approximately \$20,972 in 2005 values.) According to the catalogue copy, the model was one of the "pure bungalow type-low, a touch of rough stones, bracketed eave supports, heavy timber work, shingles and broken outlines." In promoting the house plan the company promised that the home was "compactly and conveniently arranged inside. . . . the Winthrop is typical," of the prevailing popular styles offered for the Bungalow house type throughout the first two decades of the century. The School Street home appears to have been built exactly like the advertised model with no extra customization. It also emphasizes how carefully kit house companies such as Sears and Aladdin stressed popular house designs of the period to blend in with other homes in a neighborhood (Aladdin Company 1995).

The home, originally built in 1908, was Lot 1 and the first home offered in the new Bayside subdivision of Princess Anne county. The subdivision is a good example of the early developments popping up throughout the country which included smaller lots, curving streets and beautiful landscaping. The home's own landscaping is eye-catching with its bright flowers and palm trees which evokes the spirit and plan of the California bungalow. The current owner is only the third owner of the property having bought it in 2004 from a man who had bought the property in the later years of the Depression.

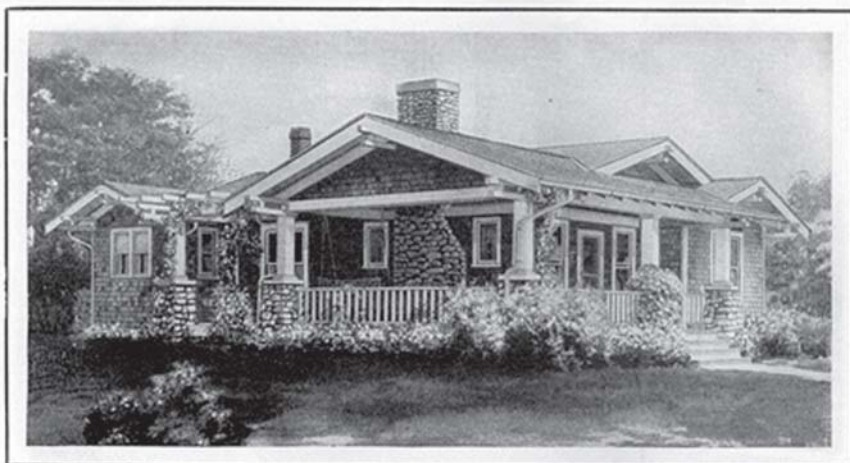
OTHER ALADDIN BUNGALOWS

Additional Bungalow models manufactured by Aladdin were identified. These include the Coronado, Pomona, Sheffield, and Victory models (Figures 46-53).

Colonial Revival

THE CRESCENT

One example of the Crescent model (122-5382) was identified in the Larchmont area of Norfolk (Figures 54 and 55). This one-story, three bay, frame and cedar wood shingle with wood cornerboards, single-family dwelling rests on a solid brick foundation of stretcher bond brick. A wood water table encircles the dwelling; just above the shingles are slightly flared. The gable-side roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has heavy cornice returns, overhanging eaves, and wide bargeboards. On the front slope are two gable-front dormers, each with a four-light casement window (Figure 56). The one-story, one-bay projecting gable-front classical portico has a full entablature and is supported by wood Tuscan columns. The central entrance door is wood paneled. Window openings consist of single and tripartite 6/1 wood sashes. Based on the floor plan found in the 1926 Sears



THE CORONADO—A Thoroughbred— Price Given On Enclosed Price List **And We Pay The Freight**

The Coronado is a thoroughbred—a typical American bungalow. The very essence of American architecture makes up its attractive lines. The sunny South is portrayed in the spacious porch, the West in the beautiful California pergola, the East receives credit for the interior of the home, while the North has loaned the shingled side walls representing Northern homes in the early days of American history. The high grade materials we furnish will do credit to this beautiful bungalow, such as the Knotless siding or shingles for exterior walls, Knotless outside finish, Knotless flooring, Knotless interior trim, beautifully grained two panel interior doors and artistic front door with three-quarter length glass. It is priced with siding on the outside walls. If shingles for the walls are desired they can be furnished without additional cost providing you are using wall sheathing beneath them. The Coronado is offered in two different sizes, enabling you to build this beautiful home in a size that will take care of your requirements. Both plans are alike in general arrangement. Three roomy bedrooms are obtained, each with a convenient clothes closet. The bath room is centrally located between the middle and rear bedrooms. Plan No. 2 in addition to all the rooms of the No. 1 plan, gives a modern breakfast room of ideal proportions. It is accessible from both the kitchen and the dining room. Lighted on three sides, its cheery atmosphere will probably mean that its usefulness will not be confined to the morning meal. The porch shown on the plan is included. The pergola rafters shown at the rear end of the porch in the Number Two Plan are not included with the Number One Plan. The picture of the Coronado shows a cobble stone fireplace chimney in the end wall of the living room. The cobble stones give a very pleasing rustic effect but if cobble stones cannot be obtained in your vicinity at a reasonable price, you can build the chimney of brick. The same is true of the porch piers. You should also remember that even when fireplaces are shown in Aladdin homes, it is not necessary that you build them. We do not cut the openings for chimneys or fireplaces in any of our houses. With the Coronado you receive 6" x 8" built-up girders and 2" x 10" floor joists on 16-inch centers. No. 1 plan is provided with 2" x 4" ceiling joists on 16-inch centers. No. 2 plan is provided with 2" x 6" ceiling joists on 16-inch centers. Both plans are furnished with 2" x 6" rafters on 24-inch centers. Ceiling height 9 feet. Roof one-sixth pitch. Asphalt strip shingles included for roof. Eaves projection No. 1 plan, 2'6"; No. 2 plan 3'0". See complete specifications on Page 7.



Silverwood, Mich.
 Dear Sirs:
 We enjoy our new Coronado home and feel perfectly satisfied with it and with our transaction with your company. We have a neighbor who expects to build soon. They have been here and looked the house over and talk favorably of buying a ready-cut house. Would you send us one of your catalogs?
 Mr. Dan Culter.

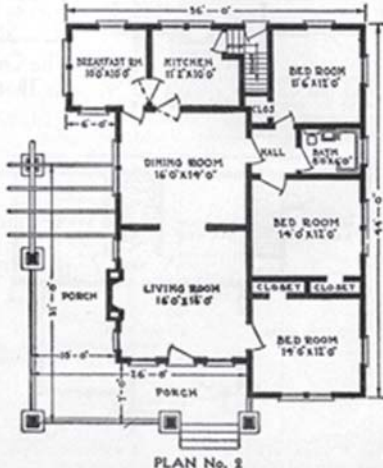
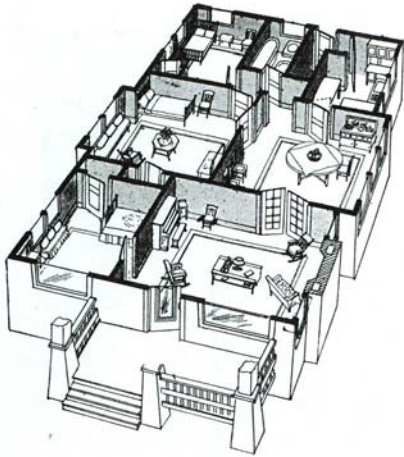


Figure 46. Catalogue page for the Aladdin Coronado model, offered in 1935 (Central Michigan University, Clarke Historical Library 2006).



Figure 47. Aladdin Coronado model (134-5099) in the Oceana area of Virginia Beach.



AN interesting story is woven into the creation of the Aladdin Pomona Home. One of California's native daughters was brought by her husband as a bride to a charming little New York village to live. While she was delighted with her new surroundings, she wanted to retain some part of the feeling and atmosphere of her golden west.

With the enthusiastic support of her husband, she appealed to Aladdin to produce a home that would radiate the delightful California sunniness and typify the bungalow-craft for which the sunset country is renowned.

Aladdin could not well overlook this unusual appeal and promptly set about the work. When the sketches, drawings and plans were submitted

to the young couple, they were so delighted that they christened the home The Pomona, as being a worthy representative of the delightful little California town of that name, from which the "girl from the golden west" came.

When the home was completed, a photograph was sent to Bay City and Aladdin was given permission to present it in the Aladdin Book of Homes.

You may be sure that since that time many other Aladdin customers have chosen it for their home and you will find Pomona designs nestling beneath trees and surrounded by pleasant gardens in many American communities.

If there is such a thing as personality in a home, the Pomona surely expresses the feeling in every angle and line. Bathed in a hot summer sun's rays, its wide eaves,



Figure 48. Catalogue page for the Aladdin Pomona model, offered in 1919 (The Aladdin Company 1995:61)



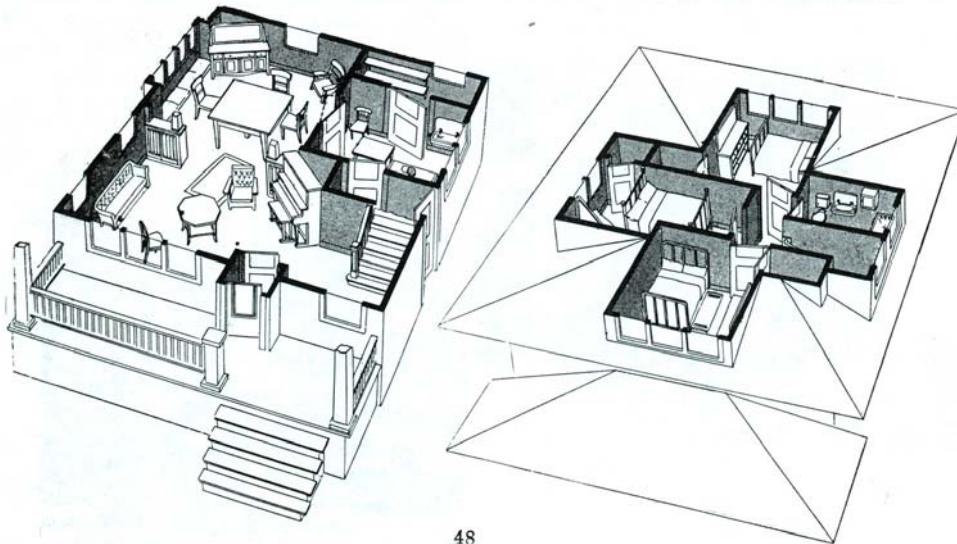
Figure 49. Aladdin Pomona model (124-5108) in the Westhaven area of Portsmouth.



The Sheffield

See prices on inside of front cover.

DO not the roof and porch lines of the Sheffield please you? The heavy overhang and Japanese roof effect give an individuality to this attractive home that invariably pleases its owner. Notice the heavy porch columns and exposed scrolled rafters. How well these carry out the general architectural lines. Ascending to the porch by the wide front steps, one is surprised with the size of the porch, 26x8 feet. An attractive front door and a French door lead into and through the vestibule to the living room. Notice the size, 26x15 feet, and the wide archway leading to the well lighted dining room. Arch A-1, page 106, is furnished for



48

Figure 50. Catalogue page for the Aladdin Sheffield model, offered in 1919 (The Aladdin Company 1995:48)



Figure 51. Aladdin Sheffield model (122-0828-0055) in Portsmouth's Winona Historic District.

The Victory

An Interesting and Charming Home Astonishingly Priced at **\$949.** We pay the Freight

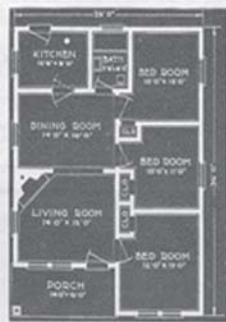


DIGNIFIED simplicity was the aim of the thoughtful designers in creating the Victory. There is spread before you on these two pages a truly remarkable selection of interesting homes. Seven arrangements of the same size structure offer you an opportunity to pick exactly what floor plan your needs demand. These plans are worthy of a very careful and painstaking study. They are the result of our experience and knowledge of 19 years in planning homes. It would be almost impossible to secure a better planned home of this size than represented among these seven plans.

Splendidly manufactured siding and flooring; clear interior wood work—that's the kind of material Aladdin furnishes. No finer quality grows. It is beautiful in grain, strong and lasting. Highest grade paints and varnishes are also supplied. You will be assured of a high type of material and construction. The Victory can be placed on a lot as narrow as 30 feet. The complete plans and illustrations and instructions furnished with each Aladdin house guard the home builder from costly mistakes and make the work pleasant and easy.

The Victory Plan W

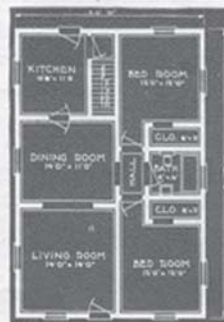
Plan W offers you a porch, big living room and dining room, three splendid bedrooms, kitchen, bath and three bedroom closets. Note spaciousness of the carefully planned bedrooms. Doors and windows are thoughtfully considered in connection with the placement of bed and other furniture. Plumbing expense is held down by placement of bath room next to the kitchen. Ample wall space in kitchen gives opportunity for excellent arrangement of fixtures. Scientific design has made this a really big home at small cost.



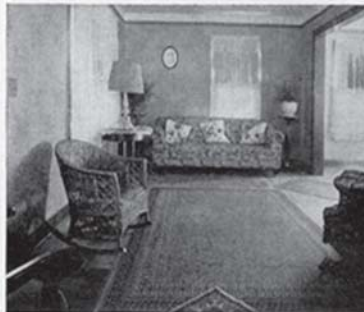
The Victory Plan W

The Victory Plan Z

This plan includes our inside cellar entrance, a feature that is of course much desired where a basement is a part of the home. Splendid living room, dining room, two bedrooms, kitchen, bath and large closets complete the home.



The Victory Plan Z



A Cozy Interior

This is how one experienced home-maker has arranged the interior. There is ample opportunity to express one's taste in this roomy home.

ALADDIN—Homebuilder to the Nation

Figure 52. Catalogue page for the Aladdin Victory model, offered in 1925 (Central Michigan University, Clarke Historical Library 2006).



Figure 53. Aladdin Victory model (131-5354), 4523 809 Stewart in Chesapeake.

The CRESCENT Five or Seven Rooms and Bath

3258-A—Already Cut and Fitted — 3259-A—Already Cut and Fitted

Monthly Payments as Low as \$35 to \$50

This well balanced bungalow with handsome Colonial entrance offers a choice of two floor plans, either of which would fit a 40-foot lot.



FLOOR PLAN 3258-A

PLAN 3258-A. Five rooms with pretty open stairway and space for finishing two rooms upstairs if desired. Two bedrooms and bath, two closets, kitchen cabinets and grade entrance. Size 34 ft. by 24 ft. with basement. First floor ceilings 9 ft. high. Living room 17 ft. 6 in. by 12 ft. 2 in. Convenient kitchen.

PLAN 3259-A. Five rooms and two porches. Size 34 ft. by 26 ft. with a 20 ft. by 10 ft. addition. All rooms are larger than in 3258A with more windows, closets and cabinets. Stair, extra closet and all rooms open off hall except dining room. Inside and outside cellar entrances.

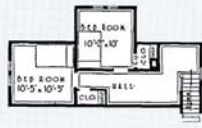
The living room is 20 ft. 3 in. by 12 ft. 3 in. with four large windows and good wall space. A semi-open stair from hall permits finishing off two additional bedrooms with closets on the second floor, if desired. The rear porch can be inexpensively screened and all rooms have cross ventilation. The kitchen cannot be



FLOOR PLAN 3259-A

seen from living room. Bedrooms and bath have complete privacy. First floor ceilings 9 ft. high. Basement, 7 ft. from floor to joists.

Fill out Information Blank for complete delivered price on material on either house and a copy of the architectural elevations and floor plans.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN 3258-A OPTION



HOME CONSTRUCTION DIVISION

Page 67

Figure 54. Catalogue page for Sears Crescent model, first offered in 1921 (Sears 2003:67).



Figure 55. Sears Crescent model (122-5382) in the Larchmont area of Norfolk.



Figure 56. Detail of dormer on Sears Crescent model (122-5382) in the Larchmont area of Norfolk.

catalog, the floor plan of this dwelling has been reversed.

Spanish Revival

THE ALHAMBRA

Perhaps the most dramatic of Sears' offerings, the Alhambra was little more than a four square house design (Figure 57). With the addition of pantile tiles on the roof, a stuccoed exterior, Spanish-mission style parapeted dormers, and an open patio area, the Alhambra was transformed into something both exotic and spacious. During the course of the survey, three Alhambra models were located: two in the Cradock Historic District and the Parkview area of Portsmouth (124-0037-0002 and 124-5115) and one in Norfolk's Winona Historic District (122-0828-0048) (Figures 58–66). Although all three have maintained their original footprint and stylistic characteristics, the house located on Afton Parkway in Portsmouth is in the best condition. The house on Ashland Avenue in Norfolk has undergone severe alterations, but does feature a porte-cochere, one of options offered by the company. In addition, another Spanish Revival style dwelling, which bears a close resemblance in materials and style to the Alhambra, was located in Norfolk's Colonial Place Historic District (122-0134) (Figure 61). This two-and-a-half-story, three bay, masonry and stucco single-family dwelling rests on a raised smooth stucco foundation. The hipped roof is covered with barrel-shaped tiles, has parapeted dormers, and one interior brick and stucco chimney. A one-story, three-bay porch roof is supported by square stucco posts. The entrance door is wood paneled with a single light. Window openings consist of wood sashes 1/1. Located on the east wall is a one-story flat roof sun-room.

Tudor Revival

THE BARRINGTON AND LYNNHAVEN

Two different Tudor revival models were identified during the survey. Three examples of "The Barrington" (Figure 62) were discovered in the oceanfront area of Virginia Beach (134-5108, 134-5109, and 134-5110) (Figures 63–65). Another model, "The Lynnhaven" (Figure 65) was found in the Westhaven area of Portsmouth (124-5096) (Figure 67). The Barrington was noted for its inset second story window, projecting steep gable-front vestibule entrance, off-center entrance door, and the small window directly above in the gable end. (The window belonged to a small bedroom on the second floor.) Some of the models had a distinctive chimney as well with large stepped shoulders that jutted out at different angles. In the properties surveyed, however, the chimneys had been obscured by one-story porch additions. One local variation of the Barrington model (133-0072-0166) was found in the Suffolk Historic District in Suffolk (Figure 68).

Builder Adaptations of Specific Kit Models

As noted above, some local builders may have adapted kit house designs to their own uses. One of the more unusual kit houses produced by Sears was the Arlington (Figure 69). Advertised as a colonial bungalow, the house was constructed of frame, weatherboard, and shingles, with distinctive blind dormers on either side of the second-story windows. The house design also included a cobblestone chimney and stickwork in the gable eaves. Two houses, on George Washington Highway in Chesapeake (131-0491) and in the Waterview area of Portsmouth (124-5105), are not Arlington models, but the builder seems to have been influenced by the design (Figures 70 and 71).

THE ALHAMBRA



The Alhambra is an effective Mission style of architecture. Its exterior appearance, as well as the interior arrangement, will appeal to anyone who likes massiveness and plenty of room.

Details and features: Eight rooms and one bath. Stucco exterior; curvilinear gables; overhanging eaves; open porch and terrace in front. Fireplace in living room; built-in sideboard in dining room; built-in seat in sun room.

Years and catalog numbers: 1918 (2090); 1919 (2090); 1921 (7080); 1924 (17090A); 1925 (17090A); 1926 (P17090A); 1928 (C17090A); 1929 (P17090A)

Price: \$1,969 to \$3,134

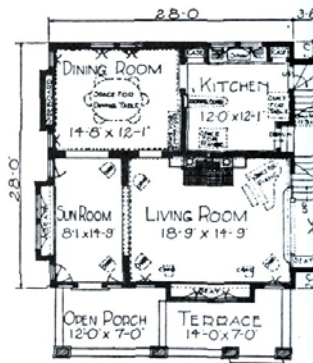
Locations: Norwood Park, Ill.; Dayton, Ohio

Similar to: The Monterey

Differences: Different gable and porch designs

Year and catalog number: 1924 (3312)

Price: \$2,998



The Monterey

Figure 57. Catalogue page for Sears Alhambra model, first offered in 1918 (Stevenson and Jandl 1986:286).



Figure 58. Sears Alhambra model (124-0037-0002) in Portsmouth's Cradock Historic District.



Figure 59. Sears Alhambra model (124-5115) Parkview area of Portsmouth.

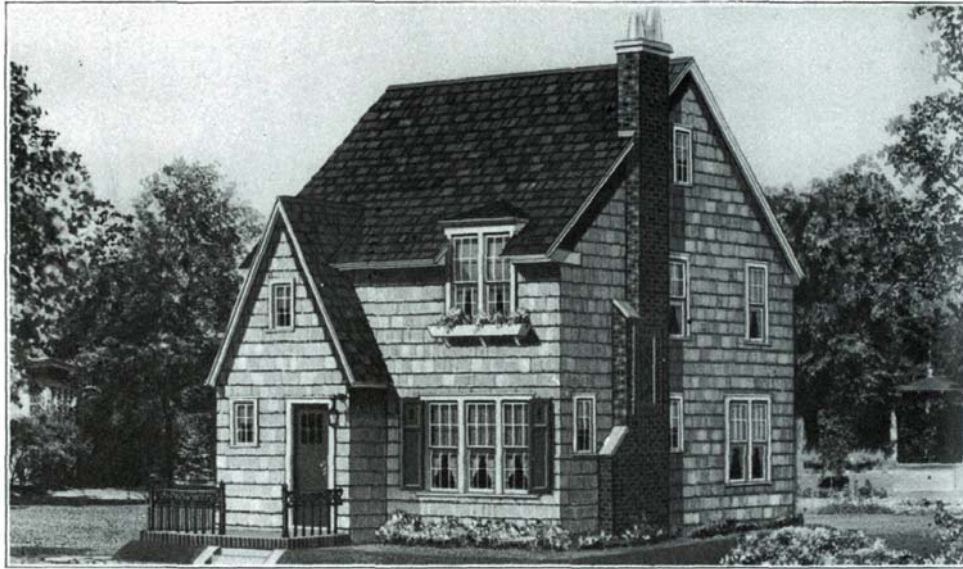


Figure 60. Sears Alhambra model (122-0828-0048) in Norfolk's Winona Historic District.

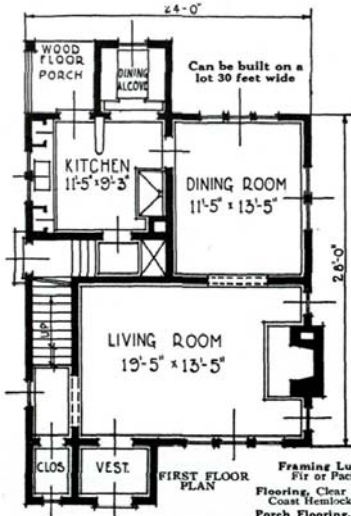


Figure 61. Spanish Mission style house (122-0134) resembling Sears Alhambra model in Norfolk's Colonial Place Historic District.

SIX ROOMS AND BATH



Honor-Bilt
The Barrington
 No. P3241 "Already Cut" and Fitted
\$2,606⁰⁰

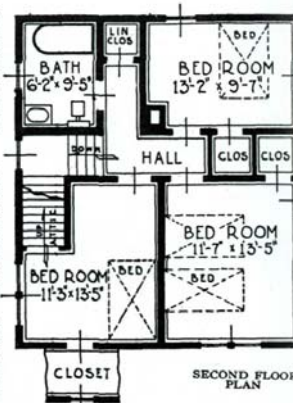


THE BARRINGTON retains the dignity of an old English home and has the practical interior of modern American architecture. Whether you consider economy, beauty or convenience as of first importance, The Barrington home assuredly meets these and every point of merit with satisfaction. Exterior features at once stamp the mark of quality. The well balanced projection at the front forms the entrance, leading to it is a tapestry brick terrace, guarded by a decorative iron railing. Sided with wide shingles and exposed fireplace chimney.

FIRST FLOOR
The Entrance. From the open terrace you enter the vestibule.
The Living Room space is 19 feet 5 inches by 13 feet 5 inches, and for all practical purposes, extends the full width of the house, because the stair hall is really a part of the living room, divided only by a cased opening. A mantel and fireplace is on the right wall, with a high casement sash on each side. Lighted by a triple window in the front. A coat closet is in the stair hall. Here the stairs ascend to the second floor.
The Dining Room. 11 feet 5 inches by 13 feet 5 inches. The rear wall is planned for buffet space, over which is a triple high casement sash. A double window on the side admits additional light and ventilation.
The Kitchen is 11 feet 5 inches by 9 feet 3 inches, just the wanted size, reducing steps and labor. One of the special built-in features is our De Luxe Outfit. Another practical item is the Built-In and Disappearing Ironing Board. A double window assures plenty of light and ventilation. A rear door leads to the rear porch. Another door leads to the side entry, which has space for a refrigerator, stairs to basement and grade. The Dining Alcove is entered from the kitchen through a wide cased opening. It has our Built-in Breakfast Set.

SECOND FLOOR
The Bedrooms. Stairway from the first floor leads to the hall which connects with three bedrooms, bathroom and linen closet. The bedroom at the right front is planned to be used as the master's room, accommodating twin beds. It has a clothes closet, a double window at the front and one window on the side. The left front bedroom contains door to attic stairs, a double window at the side and a good closet in the front. The rear bedroom has one window on each wall and a clothes closet. The bathroom has a built-in medicine case and a window.
The Basement. Room for heating plant, laundry and storage.
Height of Ceilings. First floor, 8 feet 6 inches from floor to ceiling. Second floor, 8 feet 6 inches from floor to ceiling. Basement, 7 feet from floor to joists.

What Our Price Includes
 At the price quoted we will furnish all the material to build this six-room house, consisting of:
Lumber; Lath;
Roofing, Best Grade Clear Red Cedar Shingles;
Siding, Best Grade Clear Red Cedar Shingles;
Framing Lumber, No. 1 Quality Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
Flooring, Clear Grade Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
Porch Flooring, Clear Grade Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
Porch Ceiling, Clear Grade Douglas Fir or Pacific Coast Hemlock;
Finishing Lumber; High Grade Millwork (see pages 110 and 111);
Interior Doors, Two-Panel Design of Douglas Fir;



OPTIONS
Sheet Plaster and Plaster Finish, to take the place of wood lath, \$217.00 extra. See page 109.
Storm Doors and Windows, \$126.00 extra.
Screen Doors and Windows, galvanized wire, \$87.00 extra.
Oriental Slate Surfaced Shingles, in place of wood shingles for roof, \$33.00 extra.

For prices of Plumbing, Heating, Wiring, Electric Fixtures and Shades see pages 130 and 131.

For Our Easy Payment Plan See Page 144

Figure 62. Catalogue page for Sears Barrington model, first offered in 1926 (Stevenson and Jandl 1986:154).



Figure 63. Sears Barrington model (134-5108) in the oceanfront area of Virginia Beach.

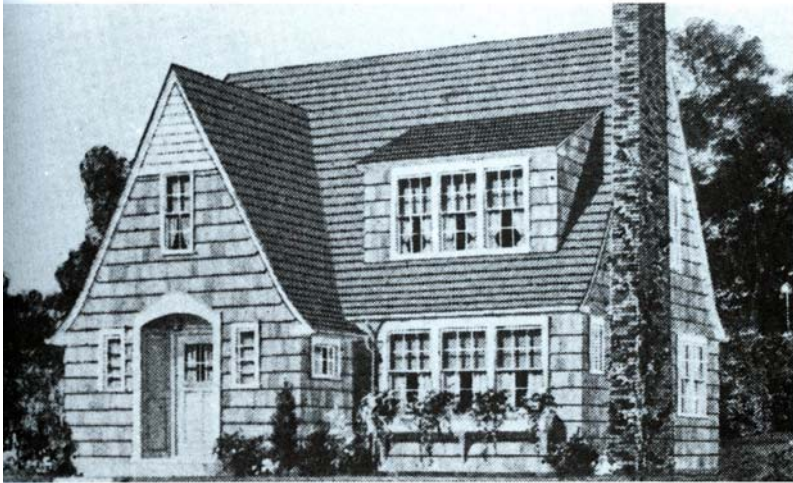


Figure 64. Sears Barrington model (134-5109) in the oceanfront area of Virginia Beach.



Figure 65. Sears Barrington model (134-5110) in the oceanfront area of Virginia Beach.

THE LYNNHAVEN



English influence is seen in this cheerful, well-proportioned residence with deep-set door and flower boxes. Fitted within the steep front gable are a vestibule, closet, lavatory and upstairs bath. Cross ventilation throughout. The china closet in the breakfast room simplifies entertaining and saves steps.

.....
 Details and features: Six rooms and one and a half baths. Shed dormer on front; front door recessed behind arch. Breakfast alcove off kitchen; semiopen stairs.

Years and catalog numbers: 1932 (3309); 1933 (3309); 1934 (3309); 1935 (3309); 1937 (3309)

Price: \$2,227 to \$2,393

Location: Waukesha, Wis.

.....
 Similar to: The Belmont

Differences: Brick exterior; floor plan reversed

Years and catalog numbers: 1932 (3345); 1933 (3345)

Price: \$2,600



The Belmont



Figure 66. Catalogue page for Sears Lynnhaven model, first offered in 1932 (Stevenson and Jandl 1986:161).



Figure 67. Sears Lynnhaven model (124-5096) in the Westhaven area of Portsmouth.



Figure 68. Variation of Sears Barrington model (133-0072-0166) in the Suffolk Historic District in Suffolk.

THE ARLINGTON



A colonial house with a bungalow effect. Note the arrangement by which the monotony of the long, sloping roof is broken, permitting four colonial windows, providing the two front bedrooms of the second floor with an abundance of light. The cobblestone outside chimney and the cluster of columns on the front porch with a bay window in the dining room are features that will be sure to please.

Details and features: Seven rooms and one bath. Wraparound front porch supported by tapered, paired columns; cobblestone chimney on side. Fireplace with brick mantel in living room; beamed ceiling in dining room; semiopen stairs.

Years and catalog numbers: 1913 (145); 1916 (264P145); 1917 (C145); 1918 (145); 1921 (1145); 1922 (1145)

Price: \$1,294 to \$2,906

Locations: Manhattan, Kans.; Black Rock, N.Y.

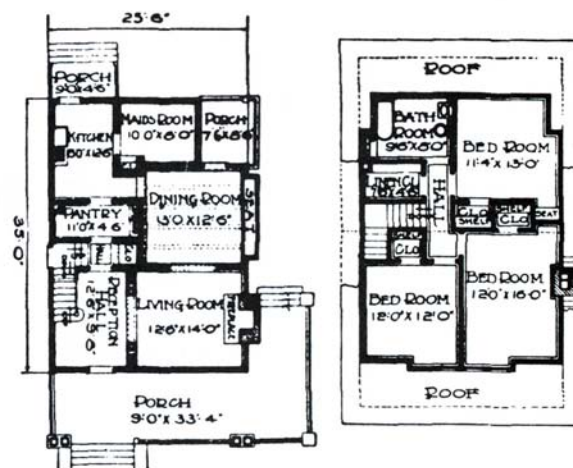


Figure 69. Catalogue page for Sears Arlington model, first offered in 1913 (Stevenson and Jandl 1986:119).



Figure 70. Influence of Sears Arlington model evident on house (131-0491) along George Washington Highway in Chesapeake.



Figure 71. Influence of Sears Arlington model evident on house (124-5105) in the Waterview area of Portsmouth.

6: Summary and Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL REGISTER AND SURVEY

Among the goals outlined for the Sears Kit House survey were: first, the completion of a building inventory for all five cities; second, evaluations of the properties documented, including recommendations for properties deserving intensive-level documentation but not documented at this level for the current study, identifying properties with potential for local historic designation or for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. Taken into consideration, too, were the potential for establishing historic districts; recommendations for changes to existing historic districts, including those considered potentially eligible, eligible, or listed on the National Register; recommendations for possible historic district boundaries; recommendations for archaeological surveys in particular areas; recommendations for significant historic view sheds that should be taken into account in planning for development; and recommendations for additional work to be considered for future survey and planning efforts.

The National Register standards for evaluating the significance of properties were developed to recognize all peoples who have made a significant contribution to the history and heritage of the United States. The criteria are designed to guide state and local governments, federal agencies, and others in evaluating potential entries in the National Register. In evaluating properties, the following criteria were applied to determine whether further study was merited:

- A. Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history; or
- B. Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic value, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Properties that have yielded, or are likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Potential Intensive Surveys

NORFOLK

2804 Argonne Avenue (Starlight Model). This one-and-a-half-story, three bay, frame and vinyl single-family dwelling rests on a solid concrete foundation. The hipped roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has overhanging eaves, boxed rafter tails, and one interior brick flue with a corbeled cap. Located on the front slope is a small frame and vinyl clipped gable roof dormer with a tripartite window. The one-story, three bay hipped roof porch is supported by wood Tuscan columns. The entrance door is wood paneled with lights. Window openings consist of 4/1 wood sashes. It is a very good example of the Sears Starlight model.

6308 Richmond Place (Crescent Model). This one-story, three bay, frame and cedar wood shingle with wood cornerboards, single-family dwelling

rests on a solid brick foundation of stretcher bond brick. A wood water table encircles the dwelling; just above, the shingles are slightly flared. The gable-side roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has heavy cornice returns, overhanging eaves, and wide bargeboards. On the front slope are two gable-front dormers, each with a 4-light casement window. The one-story, one-bay projecting gable-front classical portico has a full entablature and is supported by wood Tuscan columns. The central entrance door is wood paneled. Window openings consist of single and tripartite 6/1 wood sashes. Based on the model floor plan found in the 1926 Sears catalog, this floor plan has been reversed. This house is an excellent and intact example of the Sears Crescent model.

Gates Avenue. The surveyor could not verify whether the following three buildings on Gates Avenue were kit houses. They may be houses that were constructed by a local builder that feature the flared door and window surrounds seen elsewhere throughout the survey. All are excellent examples of high-style Craftsman bungalows.

913 Gates Avenue. This one-story, frame-and-wood-shingled single-family dwelling rests on a solid brick foundation. The complex roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has exposed rafter tails, downward pointing vertical boards in the gable end, and exposed purlins. The one-story cutaway porch roof is supported by tripled square columnettes resting on stucco piers. The entrance door is wood paneled with a single light. Window openings consist of paired and triple 1/1 wood sashes.

917 Gates Avenue. This one-story, frame-and-wood-shingled single-family dwelling rests on a solid brick foundation. The complex roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has boxed rafter tails, downward pointing board, and batten boards in the gable end and exposed purlins. The one-story cutaway porch roof is supported by tripled square columnettes resting on stucco piers. The entrance door is wood paneled with a single light. Window openings consist of paired and triple 1/1 wood sashes.

924 Gates Avenue. This one-story, three bay, frame and stucco single-family dwelling rests on a raised stretcher bond brick foundation. A one-story bay window is located on the west wall. The complex roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has overhanging eaves, exposed wood purlins, and an exterior engaged chimney with squared shoulders and a cement cap with a chimney pot. Battered wood posts resting on stuccoed piers and connected by a closed stucco balustrade support the one-story, three-bay porch roof. The entrance door is wood paneled with a single light. Window openings consist of paired and tripartite Craftsman-styled wood sashes. Unusual features of the dwelling are the slightly flared bottoms of the door and window surrounds.

SUFFOLK

College Court. College Court, made up of five bungalows, is an excellent example of a California bungalow court. Although the houses are not kit homes and are part of an historic district, it would still be worth the effort to study further this small and distinctive neighborhood in Suffolk.

Potential Historic Districts/Expansions

A more targeted survey is recommended in Chesapeake, specifically in the rural areas around the George Washington Highway. While driving through this area, the surveyor noticed what might be additional kit houses. These dwellings merit closer investigation.

It is recommended that the City of Norfolk consider expanding the existing historic districts, or explore the possibility of establishing new districts in and around the campus of Old Dominion University. These districts should include the neighborhoods of Magnolia, Monterey, and Richmond Place as well as others in the same general area. The initial survey findings suggest that there may be more kit houses in this area. Because of the plans of the university to expand, surveying

this area is a matter of some importance so that these houses may be documented if not preserved.

It is recommended that in Suffolk efforts to place Hall Place on the National Register be continued. As a result of this reconnaissance survey, it was noted that the area has kit houses. As many of these houses are becoming rental properties owned by absentee landlords, and because some of these neighborhoods are in transition, additional surveys, research, and documentation, particularly of Cedar Avenue and South Main Street, is strongly urged. Additional research to study the role of the Planters Peanut Company in providing housing for the Hall Place area should be investigated. Areas such as Second Street, where examples of working class kit houses appear to exist, might also be considered for inclusion in the West Suffolk Historic District.

It is recommended that the Alhambra model located on Afton Parkway in Portsmouth be included within the existing Cradock Historic District.

Virginia Beach has two historic areas that should be considered as threatened. The first is the Pungo village area, historically an important crossroads and transportation center for the surrounding rural area. In addition to the presence of the historic Munden General Store and the clear evidence of kit homes along the Princess Anne corridor it is strongly recommended that steps be taken to ensure that not only the kit homes, but the overall feeling of this small village crossroads be maintained and protected. Further survey efforts may identify additional kit houses. The second area of concern is the neighborhoods of Oceana. A recent drive-around by the survey team identified more kit houses in Oceana. At the very least a neighborhood reconnaissance survey should be done to document the homes in the area. Kit houses that are intact may also warrant intensive level surveys. Given the area's location near the Oceana Naval Airbase and the recent BRAC recommendations that this community of 118 houses be either razed, evacuated (with the properties used for commer-

cial purposes), or worse be abandoned threatens any ongoing efforts to establish a historic district in the area. Other opportunities for further survey work include the older neighborhoods in the area around Atlantic Avenue area where other kit houses might be located.

In general, each city should consider expanding existing historic districts to include neighborhoods where kit houses have been located.

FUTURE SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended for all five localities that efforts be made to continue to research and document kit houses. If possible, more intensive survey efforts that document all kit houses within a given locality, such as the current project being done in Portsmouth, would help clarify information and offer additional opportunities for study of kit houses. This objective can be accomplished in a number of ways: continued solicitation of information through newspaper articles; compilation of oral histories, particularly in the historic districts where information might be gained by talking with people who are familiar with the neighborhood's history, and in talks, roundtables, and other forums where an exchange of information and ideas may contribute to a growing knowledge of kit houses. Exhibits in libraries and other public buildings may also stir interest in kit houses. Soliciting and training local volunteers to locate and identify kit houses has also proved to be an invaluable source of information.

As more information about kit houses is compiled, it is also recommended that a regional database be established that not only stores data about houses from throughout the Tidewater area, but that might also serve as a model for future surveys of kit houses in other regions of the state. Submitting material to the soon-to-be-created Sears Kit House national database is also strongly recommended, first as a means of adding to the overall history of kit houses in the United States, and second, as a means of making available a record of

the Tidewater region's kit house history for scholars and the general public.

One last note: while there has been a number of popular articles and books written on Sears kit houses as well as those of other companies, there still remains a gap in the existing scholarly literature, particularly in the discussion of kit houses as a viable and important chapter in American architectural history. Existing works consulted for this report provided background about kit house catalogues and their role in the history of American pattern books and catalogues, or how kit houses played an important role in the emerging consumer

culture. Work still remains to be done on the role of kit houses and their contributions to the understanding of American architectural vernacular history, as well as their importance within the Machine Age culture that dominated American society during the period from approximately 1900 to 1945. The relationship between kit houses and the burgeoning real estate developments in creating the ideal American communities should be considered too. The data collected suggests that more in-depth research of this topic and its relationship to the Tidewater region is warranted.

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