

**LOVE THOSE
VICTORIAN-ERA
TOWERS IN AND
NEAR
THE OLD NORTH
END**

**A Photo Album Of The
Victorian-Era Towers Found On Homes
In And Around The Old North End
In Colorado Springs, Colorado**

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LOVE THOSE VICTORIAN-ERA TOWERS

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5-7
OLD NORTH END	
1. N. Nevada Avenue	9-22
2. N. Tejon Street	23-28
3. Wood Avenue	29-32
4. E. Espanola Street	33-34
5. E. Washington Street	35-36
6. W. Columbia Street	37
7. N. Cascade Avenue	38
8. E. Del Norte Street	39
OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS	
9. N. Tejon Street	40

LOVE THOSE VICTORIAN-ERA TOWERS

9. N. Weber Street	41
10. E. Dale Street	42
11. N. Nevada Avenue	43
12. N. Cascade Avenue	45

INTRODUCTION

They have been visible to you for as long as you have been hanging around the Old North End of Colorado Springs, but chances are you have paid little or no attention to them. They are those excessively decorated square, octagonal, and rounded towers located at the corners of Victorian-era homes.

They hide from you in plain sight. You won't ordinarily see them as you hurry about your busy life. You have to get out of the car and go for a walk in order to observe them closely and appreciate their great "curb appeal."

Towers tend to be located at a corner of the home – right or left – on the side facing the street. Yet sometimes towers are located along the side of a house or at a rear corner. They also can be found in the center of the façade of a home, often rising above the front door and looking like the pilot-house on a steamboat. There is a house on Wood Avenue that appears to have two tall towers, one at each corner of the front.

These Victorian-era towers come in all sizes. Some are tall, stretching upward for three stories. Others are short, occupying the corner of a bungalow or cottage. Most are two to two-and-a-half stories high and are capped with a conical roof shaped like a "witch's hat," the kind found on the Wicked Witch of the West in the film *The Wizard of Oz*.

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Atop the witch's cap you may or may not find a finial – a cast iron pipe jutting straight up in the air that comes to a point or ends with a small round ball. A few finials are shaped like snakes, birds, or other animals.

Victorian-era towers come in a variety of shapes. Some are square while others are octagonal or rounded. In all cases they demonstrate the skills of late 19th century carpenters who could design and execute such unusual architectural forms. Rounded towers, with rounded glass windows, are particularly admirable.

It is fun to be inside a home with a tower and see how the occupants are using the somewhat unusual interior space. In one home a card table and chairs had been set up to create a game-playing area for chess, checkers, bridge, etc. In most cases, however, the interior of a tower creates an interesting looking corner of a living room or dining room. It can also be a great place to display that antique family chair or table you inherited from Aunt Annabel.

Most Old North End towers are fashioned from wood. In many cases, the outside walls of the tower will be covered with a variety of wood surfaces, such as siding or regular square shingles or shingles shaped like fish scales. Putting a different wood surface on different stories of the tower just adds to the Victorian-era charm.

Old North Enders can thank Queen Victoria of England and the gold strikes at Cripple Creek and Victor in the 1890s for our ornate residential towers.

Colorado Springs was founded in 1871 and began to develop during the last 25 years of the reign of Queen Victoria in England. She passed away

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in 1901, but she gave the name Victorian to a period of architecture famous for an elaborate decorativeness that manifested in the form of towers, often clock towers, on large public buildings. This propensity for building towers was then copied on residences built during the same period, both in Great Britain and the United States.

When gold was discovered by Bob Womack at Cripple Creek and Victor in 1891, the instant wealth flowed down the mountains to Colorado Springs. Stock trading and manufacturing mining supplies concentrated in Colorado Springs rather than at high elevations in Cripple Creek and Victor. The result was plenty of money to decorate the new homes of the gold-profiting upper middle-class with beautiful and ornate Victorian-era towers.

The Old North End, and surrounding areas, are lucky to have this treasury of private homes with towers. Slow down a bit, park the car, do more walking, and fall in love with them.

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1223 North Nevada Avenue

This round wooden Victorian tower occupies the northwest corner of this Queen Anne style home. The tower sports a large conical “witch’s hat” on top that comes to a nice point. The trim of the main house – wood shingles on the first two floors and modillions (wood supports) under the eaves of the roof – is carried over to the tower. The witch’s hat resembles the one worn by the Wicked Witch of the West in the film *The Wizard of Oz*.

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1312 North Nevada Avenue

Poking out from all of the trees is this two-story round tower. It has a witch's cap covered with roof shingles, which have been matched with fish scale shingles on the top of the adjoining gable front. The tower is nicely separated from the main body of the house.

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1319 North Nevada Avenue

This portion of an octagonal tower sits in the front wall of this Dutch Colonial home. A small window in the tower faces the street.

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1423 North Nevada Avenue

This Victorian tower sits at the right side of the front wall of this home. As is often the case, it is matched on the other side of the front wall by an elaborately decorated dormer window. The shingled roof atop the tower (witch's hat) has interesting shingle-stripes running up to a point at the top of the tower, which has a pointed finial. The fish scale shingles on the part-octagonal tower match those on the remainder of the house.

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1432-1434 North Nevada Avenue

This tall narrow tower juts away from the northwest corner of this home, making the tower more prominent. The witch's hat roof has those vertical shingle-stripes that draw the eye to the point at the top of the tower.

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1437 North Nevada Avenue

This bold and wide tower is proportional to the large home on which it occupies the southwest corner. The tower is nicely decorated with wide eaves under the tower roof (a low witch's hat) and eave brackets. There is also a nice pattern of alternating vertical stripes under the roof eaves. As is the usual case, the tower is balanced at the other front corner of the house with a large gable front. This is one of the most "noticeable" residential Victorian towers in Colorado Springs.

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1519 North Nevada Avenue

This tall narrow tower extends for a short distance above the second story. Another great feature is the way the front porch mimics the part-octagonal shape of the tower. The modillions (wood supports) under the tower roof match those under the house roof. The decorative swag detail above the second story windows in the tower is matched on the gable-front dormer window on the third floor and the pediment above the front entrance. The tower is balanced on the other side of the façade with an oculus (circular) window.

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1624 North Nevada Avenue

Victorian-era towers are found on small homes as well as large ones. This tall and narrow part-octagonal tower is mimicked in the shape of the front porch. The tower is balanced on the other half of the house by a decorative gable-front with a curving overhang above the gable-front window. There is a decorative finial atop the witch's hat.

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1807 North Nevada Avenue

This is a different way to put a tower on a small home. The tower is low and broad and includes a major portion of the second floor front. As often seen, the shape of the front porch has been modified to fit the part-octagonal shape of the tower. Due to the slanting of the front porch roof, only the small windowed portion of the tower is visible on the second story. The squat roof on the tower might be labeled a “flattened” witch’s hat.

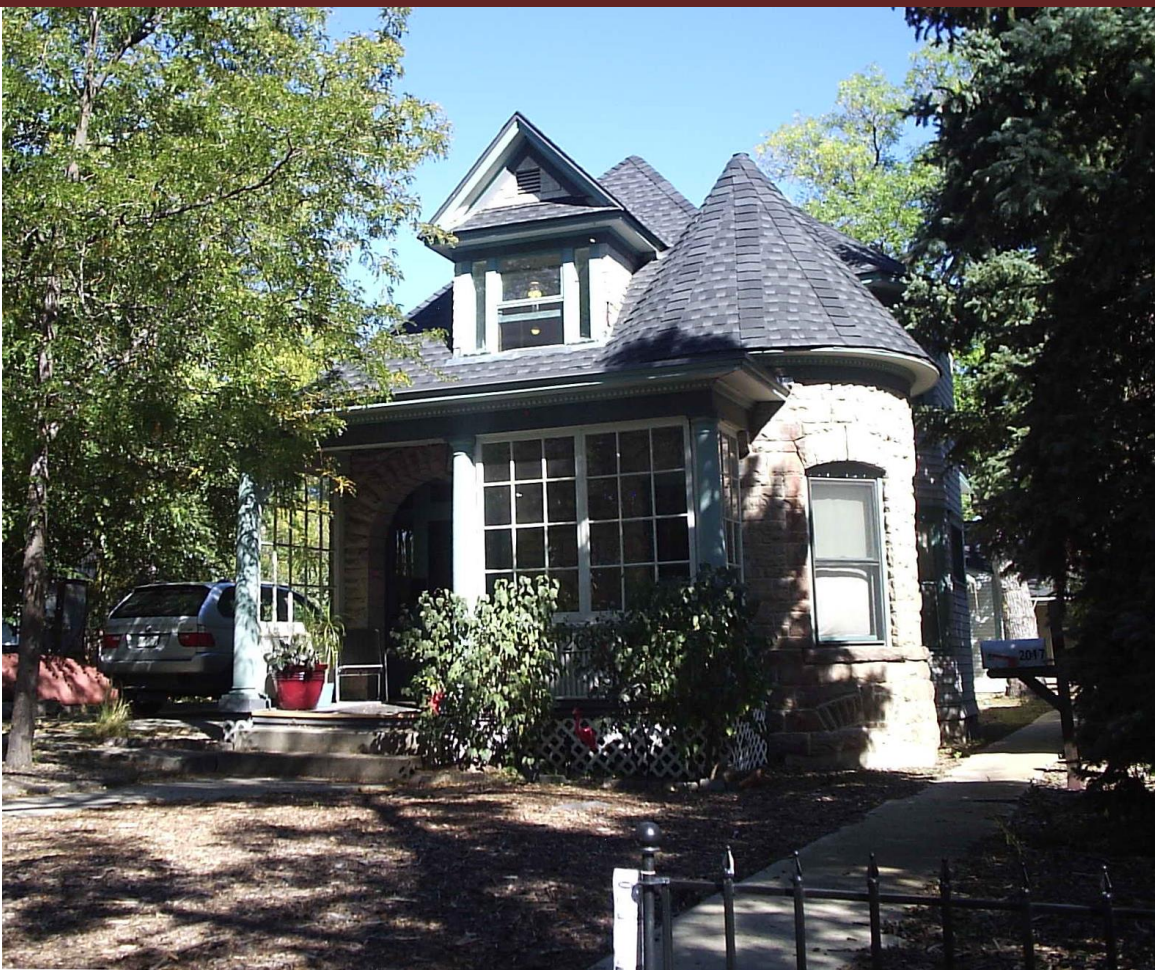
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1811 North Nevada Avenue

This is a turret rather than a tower, because the base of the tower does not go down to the ground. The turret juts out from the second story on the front side of the house and is supported by the full-length porch roof. Also the turret is centered rather than being at a corner of the building. The turret on this home is reminiscent of the pilot house on a river steamboat of the late 19th Century. The roof style on this house is Dutch Colonial.

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2019 North Nevada Avenue

This is charming. Here is a one-story stone tower with a witch's cap. There is a shallow-arched window in the tower. The overall look is positively medieval. Complimenting the tower is a decorative second-story dormer window with a gable roof. Also note the stone arched doorway.

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2020 North Nevada Avenue

This front-and-center Victorian tower is partially hidden behind the glassed-in front porch. The front porch follows the shape of the tower and is quite spacious as a result. The tower adds quite a bit of well-windowed living space to the second story.

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2024 North Nevada Avenue

This tower dominates the entire design of the façade of the house. It is a tower because the base goes all the way to ground level. The roomy full-length front porch completely follows the part-octagonal shape of the tower. The tower sports three windows on both the first and second stories. This home is a close match to the previous home at 2020 North Nevada Avenue, but it is without the glassed-in front porch.

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2104 North Nevada Avenue

Here is another small home using a centrally located Victorian tower as its major design feature. Note the modillions (wooden strips) supporting the eaves of the roof of the tower. This home has a very substantial stone front porch with a closed stone railing.

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1402 North Tejon Street

This two-story tower has the front porch and front door of the house attached to it. This is proof that Victorian towers can be located in any part of the house and used for any purpose. There is a small finial at the top of the conical witch's hat. This Victorian house was built as a two-family home. There is another tower with a separate front door on the other side.

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1410 North Tejon Street

This two-story tower is nicely separated from the main body of the house and thus stands out in appearance. The witch's hat roof has vertical lines of shingles merging into a decorative finial on top. The eaves of the tower roof connect nicely to the eaves of the house roof.

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1418 North Tejon Street

This square tower is built right into the corner of the house. It has an attractive finial on top of it.

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1439 NORTH TEJON STREET

This Queen Anne style home has a square tower with a uniquely shaped tower roof. There is a full-length front porch with a pediment over the porch entrance. The exterior walls are covered with an interesting mix of square shingles and fish scale shingles.

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1523 NORTH TEJON STREET

This Queen Anne home sports a Victorian-era round tower with a low pointed roof atop it. Next to the tower is a partial front porch.

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1715 North Tejon Street

This picturesque Queen Anne home has wood siding on the first story and fish scale shingles on the second story. The tower is matched on the other side of the façade with a window with a large gable roof on top of it. There is a partial front porch.

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1409 Wood Avenue

This is interesting. There is a large round tower on the right nicely balanced by an octagonal dormer window on the left. The visual effect is that, from the second story on up, this looks like a house with two towers. Both the tower and the dormer have a witch's cap atop them. The eave of the house roof, nicely decorated with modillions, comes only halfway across the large tower. There is an oculus (round window) looking out on the engaged front porch. On the interior, the large round tower is an expanded corner of the living room.

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1440 Wood Avenue

No home is so small as not to rate a decorative Victorian-era tower. This little cottage, located on one of the best known streets in Colorado Springs, has a one-story octagonal tower with a witch's cap.

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1502 Wood Avenue

Here is an attractive two-story tower on a two-story house.

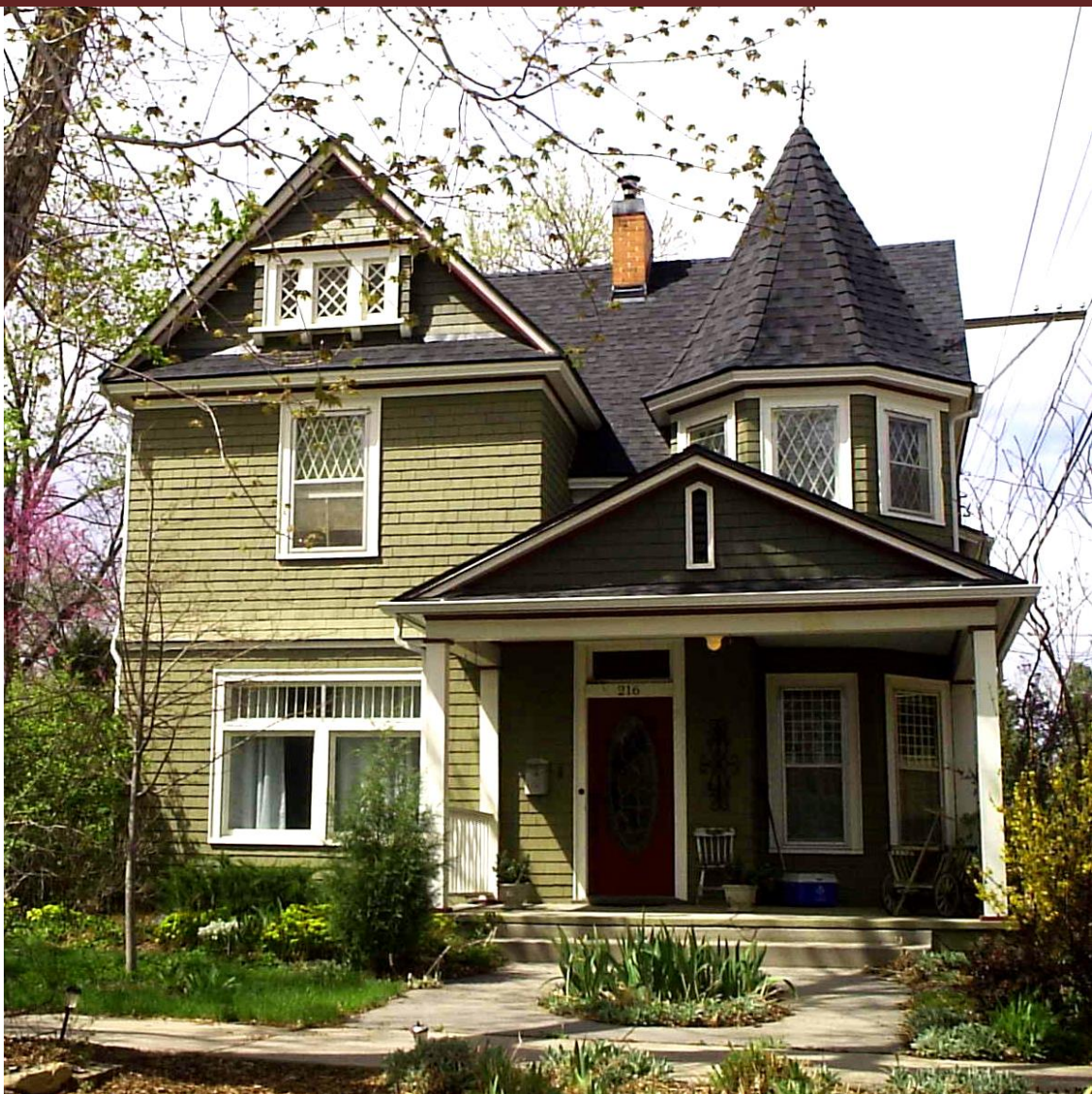
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1700 Wood Avenue

This tower is round and wide and nicely set apart from the house. It fits perfectly on a one-and-a-half story home with beautifully recessed second story front windows. There is an elaborate finial atop the witch's cap. Inside the tower, an area has been set aside for card table games such as checkers and chess.

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216 East Espanola Street

This tower is set back behind the elevated roof of the partial front porch. The tower has diamond-shaped trimming in its second-floor windows that matches the diamond trimming in the other second-floor (and third-floor) windows. Although it needs straightening, the finial atop the witch's hat tower roof is attractive.

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218 East Espanola Street

This tower is square, a shape that is not found as often as round and part-octagonal. The tower seems mainly decorative, because it is located alongside what appears to be the attic section of the house. The finial atop the tower roof is attractive.

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122 East Washington Street

Here is a small home with a big and bold tower. The witch's hat roof on the tower is nicely integrated with the roof of the house.

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123 East Washington Street

This is a true turret rather than a tower, because there is no base under the turret running down to ground level. The turret has a Palladian window spread over three adjoining surfaces. A Palladian window has a tall center window with an arch at the top and two adjoining square windows on both sides.

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Wood Avenue and West Columbia Street

Here is a fine example of a large tower on a large home. The octagonal tower is well-separated from the house structure (a point to look for) with at least six of the eight sides of the octagon visible. Note how the three windows on the first floor of the tower somewhat match the three-window bay window on the opposite side of the façade. The pediment over the front porch nicely matches the gable roof on the third floor dormer window. There is a nice white ball serving as the finial atop the witch's cap atop the tower.

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1619 North Cascade Avenue

This Victorian Cottage has a wide two-story tower with a witch's cap. The tower is balanced by a dormer window on the other side of the house front. This is a big tower on a small house.

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20 East Del Norte Street

Here is another pilot house tower, so called because it resembles the pilot house on a river steamboat of the late 19th Century. The roof on this house has the bend that identifies it as Dutch Colonial style.

OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS



802 North Tejon Street

This tower occupies the corner of a Victorian-era apartment building located on the south side of Colorado College. The exterior walls of the upper floors are covered with decorative fish scale shingles. This is a rare example of using the first floor of a tower for a first floor entrance. It is attractive that the round shape of the front porch follows the round shape of the tower.

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505 North Weber Street

Only five blocks from the downtown center of Colorado Springs stands this tall and broad example of a Victorian-era tower. There are square wooden shingles covering the first story of the home with fish scale shingles on the second story.

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222 East Dale Street

This Victorian home with a tower and witch's hat belongs to Colorado College and is the religious studies center. Note the unusually elaborate dormer window adjacent to the tower. Also note the red-and-white design between the first story and the second story of the tower.

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618 NORTH NEVADA AVENUE

This house is an excellent example of the larger Queen Anne style dwellings erected in Colorado Springs in the late 19th century. The home was built in 1896. Representative features include the asymmetrical composition with multiple gables and a corner tower with a witch's hat.

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730 NORTH NEVADA AVENUE

This rambling, simplified Queen Anne was built by Charles H. Burgess, who moved to Colorado Springs from Sandwich, Massachusetts. The residence served the Burgess family for almost 100 years. Charles and his wife moved back to Massachusetts in 1900. Then his son Willard and his wife moved in. Architecturally this building is probably a pattern book design. The plans were taken from a book of architectural designs, usually providing enough information for non-architects to build structures that are copies or derivative of major architectural works.

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730 NORTH CASCADE AVENUE

This house combines Queen Anne forms and English detailing. It is an excellent example of the domestic architecture constructed in Colorado in the late 19th century. The light brown, pinkish stone was quarried from the “Divide,” as the area north of Colorado Springs near the present-day town of Monument was called. The half-timbering in the large roof gables gives it an English look, exemplifying the “Little London” moniker often applied to Colorado Springs.

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