

Appendix E

Glossary of Architectural Terms

architrave. The lowest horizontal element of a classical entablature; *see also* orders. The ornamental moldings (trim) around windows, doors and other wall openings.

articulated. Put together by joints.

awning window. One or more sash hinged horizontally, the bottom of which swings outward (awning type) or the top of which swings inward (hopper type).

baluster, balustrade (pl.). A shaped, short vertical member, often circular in section, supporting a railing or capping; (pl.) the composite form involving a series of balusters.

bargeboard. A board, typically decorated, on the sloping edge of an overhanging gable roof.

bay. A regularly repeated main division of a building design.

bay window. A window structure projecting beyond the main wall plane; if attached to the building above ground level, properly called an *oriel*.

bead, beading. A small molding of semicircular or greater profile.

blind. A louvered shutter that excludes vision and direct sunlight, but not indirect light and air, from a house.

blind window. A window that does not open to the interior and hence is false, for external effect only.

bluff. A high steep bank along the beach; created by coastal erosion.

bow window. A bay window that projects from a wall plane in an arc.

bracket. A projecting support placed under an architectural overhang such as a cornice; often ornate, and popular on Victorian buildings.

bulk. The size of a building, measured not only by its volume but by the magnitude of its external dimensions; in a design context, the apparent size of a building from different viewing points.

Cape style. Generic, side-gabled, three-to-four bay, 1-to-1-1/2 story cottage popular since the 1950s.

capital. The top part or head of a column; *see also* orders.

casement. A window sash that swings open along its entire length; usually hinged on the side of the wall opening.

casing. The exposed architectural framework or trim around a wall opening.

clapboards. Narrow boards applied horizontally to an exterior wall, each of which overlaps the one below it to create a continuous skin over the wooden frame.

classical. Pertaining to the architecture of ancient Hellenic Greece and Imperial Rome; more generally, later styles, such as the Renaissance and Baroque in Europe, that adapted these elements, especially the column orders.

colonnade. A series of regularly spaced columns supporting an entablature and usually one side of a roof.

column. A long vertical structural member that supports a load; in classical terms, a cylindrical support having a base, shaft and capital; *see also* orders.

cornice. Any continuous molded projection that crowns or finishes the part to which it is affixed, such as a wall or door opening; most notably the exterior trim of a structure at the meeting of the roof and wall; in classical terms, the upper projecting part of the entablature.

cupola. A small structure, often dome-shaped, mounted on a roof, with windows in the sides for light; a lantern.

deck. Any unroofed level surface and its supporting members that is attached to or made part of a building to create an exterior living space.

Doric. The primary Greek order, comprising a sturdy, fluted shaft without a base and with a simple circular cushion capital.

dormer. A roofed structure with a vertical window that projects from a pitched roof.

double-hung window. A window with two vertical sliding sash, each closing half of the window opening.

eave. The lower part of a roof that projects beyond the wall.

elevation. The perpendicular view of a side of a building; hence, an accurate drawing of one side of a building that represents its true dimensions in the plane perpendicular to the line of sight; in reference to land or a building position, the vertical distance (height) of a point above a known reference point (such as sea level or an established bench mark).

ell. A wing or addition extended from the back of a house, containing full-sized rooms.

entablature. The horizontal member carried by columns, composed of architrave (bottom), frieze and cornice (top); *see also* orders.

facade. The exterior front face of a building; usually the most ornate or articulated elevation.

fanlight. A half-circular or half-elliptical window; often placed over a door.

fascia. In classical architecture, the uppermost part of the entablature. The vertical face of the projecting cornice.

fenestration. The arrangement and design of windows in a building.

flange. A projecting ridge, collar or plane.

Flexivent. A brand name awning or hopper of window; typically used with a large fixed pane above it.

fosse. In geology, a linear depression and ridge gouged out by the forward edge of a glacier.

frieze. In classical architecture, the mid-section of the entablature. An applied piece of trim (molding) on the face of a building directly under the cornice.

French door. A door with a top and bottom rail, stiles (sides) and glass panes throughout most of its length.

frontispiece. An ornamental portal or entrance bay around a main door.

gable. The vertical triangular shape of a building wall above the cornice height formed by two sloping roof planes.

gambrel. A roof with a double pitch on opposing sides of a vertical gable wall.

garret. The space (or rooms) within the roof structure.

heath. A low height plant community (predominantly beach heath, lichen and bearberry) that covers unmanaged lands of the island until overtaken by larger plants.

hip. The external angle at the intersection of two roof planes; a hip roof has roof planes that slope toward the center from all sides.

hood. A projecting cover placed over an opening to shelter it.

kettle. In geology, a ground depression formed by the melting of a large block of ice imbedded in a glacial deposit.

leader. A rain water downspout.

lean-to. A gable-roofed house that is taller in front, with a longer rear roof slope to a low back wall.

light. A pane of glass installed in a window; a window itself.

lintel. A horizontal structural member that bridges an opening.

mansard. A roof that is double-pitched on all four sides, the lower slope being much steeper.

mass. A simple three-dimensional building volume; a solid object that occupies space.

massing. The combination of several masses to create a building volume; organization of the shape of a building, as differentiated from wall treatment, fenestration, etc.

moors. A gently rolling open landscape characterized by low ground cover plants such as heath and heather.

moraine. In geology, an undulating terrain formed by deposition of glacial debris left by the receding ice sheet and by subsequently melting ice blocks.

mullion. A vertical member separating windows, doors or panels set in series; often used for structural purposes.

muntin. A slender member separating and encasing panes of glass in a window, door or wall.

oculus. A small, round window.

orders. Different styles of classical architecture, each based on a particular design of column and the entablature above it; the Greek orders were Doric, Ionic and Corinthian; the later Roman adaptations were Tuscan, Roman Doric and Composite.

outwash plain. In geology, a flat plain formed by the alluvial wash of sediment and till from a melting glacier.

Palladian. Of or in the classical Roman style as adapted by Italian architect Andrea Palladio (1518-1580); usually, the imposition of forms from ancient Roman architecture such as pediments, pilasters, columns, etc. on buildings, particularly windows, as elaborate detail.

pane. A small pane of glass in a window.

parapet. A low wall section rising above a roof or other feature with a sudden drop, such as the edge of a terrace.

parge. To coat masonry with cement mortar or stucco, usually containing damp-proofing ingredients.

pediment. In classical architecture, the triangular gable end of a roof above a horizontal cornice.

pergola. A garden structure with an open wood-framed roof, often latticed.

picket fence. A fence formed by a series of vertical pales, posts or stakes and joined together by horizontal rails.

picture window. A large fixed window, often between two narrower, operable sash.

pilaster. A flat vertical element applied to the wall surface that simulates a classical column.

pitch. The slope of a roof; usually expressed as a ratio of vertical rise to horizontal run (X inches vertical in 12 inches horizontal).

plan. A two-dimensional view of a building, or horizontal section of it, seen from above; hence, a precise drawing showing the arrangement of the design, including wall openings and dimensions.

porch. In early buildings, the internal entry with staircase; later, a Nantucket term for the service ell; in recent times, a structure attached to a building to shelter an entrance or to serve as a semi-enclosed space, usually roofed and generally open-sided.

portico. A porch or covered walkway with a roof supported by columns.

proportion. The relation of one dimension to another; usually described as a numerical ratio; in architecture, proportions determine the creation of visual order through coordination of shapes in a design.

quoin. A masonry (or simulated masonry) unit applied to the corner of a building; often slightly projecting.

rakeboard. A sloping board or molding that covers the edge of the wall surfacing along the edge of a gable.

ridge. The horizontal intersection of two sloping roof planes.

saltbox. A name for the lean-to house; derived from the shape of 19th century kitchen saltboxes.

sash. The movable framework holding the glass in a window.

scale. The relationship between the apparent size of a building and the size of a human being; in a drawing, a system of proportion by which precise magnitudes represent large magnitudes, usually the life-size dimensions of a building.

shed roof. A single-pitched roof over a small room; often attached to a main structure.

shutter. An external movable screen or door used to cover a wall opening, especially a window; originally for security purposes; often confused with louvered blinds.

sidelight. A framed area of fixed glass alongside a door or window opening.

sill. The horizontal lower member of a window or other frame.

site plan. An accurate scaled drawing of a site (lot) as if seen from above, describing the property buildings, driveways, walks and other constructed site improvements, the retained vegetation and new plantings and finished grade contours.

skylight. A glazed opening in a roof plane that admits light.

spandrel. The triangular space between the exterior curve of an arch and its rectangular enframing or molding enclosing it.

stoop. An uncovered platform and steps at an entrance.

texture. The arrangement of particles or constituent units of any material or grouping as it affects the appearance or feel of its surfaces; structure, grain composition, etc.

typical Nantucket house. An unornamented two-story, four-bay, gable-roof house with center chimney.

veranda. A covered porch or balcony extending alongside a building; planned for outdoor leisure.

vernacular architecture. A building form native to a locale and derived from simple and direct adaptation to functional needs, using the materials and methods at the command of local artisans; without regard for formal or precise stylistic notation, but based on tradition and practicality.

wart. A small shed attached to a larger structure.

winder. A wedge-shaped step in a turned or curved stair run.

Note: Some of these terms were derived from *The Architecture of Historic Nantucket*, by Clay Lancaster, and *Historic Architecture Sourcebook*, by Cyril M. Harris. These two references and *What Style Is It?*, by John Poppeliers, S. Allen Chambers and Nancy B. Schwartz, may be referred to for further information.



Decorative late 19th-century porch detail.