

History of Interior Design 1: ITMD 230-2

Lori Wolper, Historical Study, 7/8/2026



I chose a residential house that sits adjacent to Loose Park in Kansas City, Missouri. The location is West 55th Street, running horizontally to Wornall Road and Ward Parkway. This lovely home with three floors and most likely a basement has a beautiful yard with an extended walkway from the street to the front door. This structure looks to be quite strong and robust. I do not know the year that it was built.

I feel like this house has various historical details that affect the style of the structure. The neoclassic buildings often have the appearance of Greek temples. In the United States, the Greek revival style happened at the same time as the westward expansion, and courthouses and state capitol buildings have Greek architectural forms. Based on our ancient civilization studies, this house has multiple influences that have shaped the style it portrays today, Greek Revival Style. The ancient Minoan post-and-lintel construction used columns or piers for functional support. The colonnades were constructed and pedestals were used for both sculpture and buildings. Greek ornament elements on buildings were influenced from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, and Mycenae civilizations.

Important buildings were built on the top step (stylobate) of a crepidoma, or platform: those for temples had three steps, less important buildings, a single step. The first influence I see is the large, **covered porch entrance**. The Greek temple was surrounded by an enclosed temenos and was often approached through a monumental gateway or propylum. This house looks monumental with its gateway entrance. The structure terrace or porch is adorned with a covered ceiling that not only is a structural component but functions as a balcony above the ceiling. It has a basic form of the stoa, which was a wall fronted by a covered colonnade that provided shade and protection during incoming weather. This area not only helps shade the home from the sun but also protects the walls from severe weather. In the Minoan civilization, residential quarters consisted of a main room called a cella. The cella was approached through a covered porch supported by wood columns or stone alternating pillars. The living area was connected to a corridor or hallway. In the photo, the cella is the entryway into the home from the front porch. Earlier in palaces, the megaron was private and adjacent to a large open courtyard. We could describe this courtyard today as the front yard or garden.

The second influence I see are the **massive columns** in front of the house. Based on the information in the book the basic design for Greek columns was not that much different from the Egyptians. Egyptian columns were circular as well, but I feel like these columns can be described with the Greek orders are named after the appearance of their column capital. The Greek columns often had an “entasis” to it – a slight curve on the shaft of the column to correct for the optical illusion of the column being smaller at the top. The Ionic order, originating in the sixth century BC, was more graceful than the Doric and reflected the Eastern influence of Asia Minor. Greek Golden section based on a symmetrical entry centered in the middle of the gable ends and the balcony above. The Minoan columns were mounted on square or circular stone bases, and the shafts were inverted and tapered downward to a smaller diameter at the bottom. If you look closely, you will see the column shaft is slenderer in the picture like the Minoan and Ionic columns. The early Minoan civilization on the island of Crete used spirals in their art as well. Ionic order developed in the Ionian Islands, and its curved volutes (circular motif) may be based on the spirals in seashells. The same curved spiral is at the top of the capital part on the upper column in the photo. It is under the square abacus connecting the shaft of the column.

The third influence I see is the **decorative molding** at the top of the framed porch. Roofs changed from early flat examples covered with clay to the gabled or truss form for which the Greeks have been credited Greek buildings were the first to make extensive use of moldings, which were used to separate architectural elements, outline edges, divide.

large areas and emphasize the functions of components. You can see the different layers of molding. There are layers of molding on top of the columns. It looks like a thin fillet first and perhaps astragal molding next. The top molding is a cyma which projects with a double curve and an ogee profile. The cyma molding has each of the two types both a convex and a concave arc like a quarter circle. Then at the very top of the molding looks like a transitional piece like a smaller square vertical frieze.

I feel like this home looks like a Greek temple in the front, but the one difference is there is not a colonnade that goes all the way around the house. The columns and porch have more Greek influence than Roman. This is a tetrastyle because of the number of four columns that stand out in the front. It could be influenced by the Romans as well because of the columns only in the front and not all the way around. The simple column is more like what you see in Greece, but the material and paint is more influenced by the Romans because they painted many of their columns or used stucco. I always learn so much when studying the older homes in our Kansas City metro area it is fascinating how each home is so incredibly different and influenced by other civilizations as well.

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