

## Chapter 1 : How Can I Identify Architectural Character? – Historic Hawaii Foundation

*The Architectural Character Checklist/Questionnaire return to top This checklist can be taken to the building and used to identify those aspects that give the building and setting its essential visual qualities and character.*

Every old building is unique, with its own identity and its own distinctive character. Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic building. Character-defining elements include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. The purpose of this Brief is to help the owner or the architect identify those features or elements that give the building its visual character and that should be taken into account in order to preserve them to the maximum extent possible. There are different ways of understanding old buildings. Buildings can be studied as examples of using specific materials such as concrete, wood, steel, or limestone. They can also be considered as examples of an historical period, which is often related to a specific architectural style, such as Gothic Revival farmhouses, one-story bungalows, or Art Deco apartment buildings. There are many other facets of an historic building besides its functional type, its materials or construction or style that contribute to its historic qualities or significance. Some of these qualities are feelings conveyed by the sense of time and place or in buildings associated with events or people. A complete understanding of any property may require documentary research about its style, construction, function, its furnishings or contents; knowledge about the original builder, owners, and later occupants; and knowledge about the evolutionary history of the building. Even though buildings may be of historic, rather than architectural significance, it is their tangible elements that embody its significance for association with specific events or persons and it is those tangible elements both on the exterior and interior that should be preserved. Therefore, the approach taken in this Brief is limited to identifying those visual and tangible aspects of the historic building. While this may aid in the planning process for carrying out any ongoing or new use or restoration of the building, this approach is not a substitute for developing an understanding about the significance of an historic building and the district in which it is located. If the various materials, features and spaces that give a building its visual character are not recognized and preserved, then essential aspects of its character may be damaged in the process of change. This approach involves first examining the building from a far to understand its overall setting and architectural context; then moving up very close to appreciate its materials and the craftsmanship and surface finishes evident in these materials; and then going into and through the building to perceive those spaces, rooms and details that comprise its interior visual character.

**Identify the Overall Visual Aspects** Identifying the overall visual character of a building is nothing more than looking at its distinguishing physical aspects without focusing on its details. Step One involves looking at the building from a distance to understand the character of its site and setting, and it involves walking around the building where that is possible. Some buildings will have one or more sides that are more important than the others because they are more highly visible. This does not mean that the rear of the building is of no value whatever but it simply means that it is less important to the overall character. On the other hand, the rear may have an interesting back porch or offer a private garden space or some other aspect that may contribute to the visual character. Such a general approach to looking at the building and site will provide a better understanding of its overall character without having to resort to an infinitely long checklist of its possible features and details. Regardless of whether a building is complicated or relatively plain, it is these broad categories that contribute to an understanding of the overall character rather than the specifics of architectural features such as moldings and their profiles. In some instances, the visual character is the result of the juxtaposition of materials that are contrastingly different in their color and texture. The surface qualities of the materials may be important because they impart the very sense of craftsmanship and age that distinguishes historic buildings from other buildings. Furthermore, many of these close-up qualities can be easily damaged or obscured by work that affects those surfaces. Examples of this could include painting previously unpainted masonry, rotary disk sanding of smooth wood siding to remove paint, abrasive cleaning of tooled stonework, or repointing reddish mortar joints with gray portland cement.

**Identify the Visual Character of Interior Spaces,**

**Features and Finishes** Perceiving the character of interior spaces can be somewhat more difficult than dealing with the exterior. In part, this is because so much of the exterior can be seen at one time and it is possible to grasp its essential character rather quickly. To understand the interior character, Step Three says it is necessary to move through the spaces one at a time. While it is not difficult to perceive the character of one individual room, it becomes more difficult to deal with spaces that are interconnected and interrelated. Sometimes, as in office buildings, it is the vestibules or lobbies or corridors that are important to the interior character of the building. With other groups of buildings the visual qualities of the interior are related to the plan of the building, as in a church with its axial plan creating a narrow tunnel-like space which obviously has a different character than an open space like a sports pavilion. Thus the shape of the space may be an essential part of its character. With some buildings it is possible to perceive that there is a visual linkage in a sequence of spaces, as in a hotel, from the lobby to the grand staircase to the ballroom. Closing off the openings between those spaces would change the character from visually linked spaces to a series of closed spaces. For example, in a house that has a front and back parlor linked with an open archway, the two rooms are perceived together, and this visual relationship is part of the character of the building. To close off the open archway would change the character of such a residence. The importance of interior features and finishes to the character of the building should not be overlooked. In relatively simpler rooms, the primary visual aspects may be in features such as fireplace mantels, lighting fixtures or wooden floors. In some rooms, the absolute plainness is the character-defining aspect of the interior. So-called secondary spaces also may be important in their own way, from the standpoint of history or because of the family activities that occurred in those rooms. Such secondary spaces, while perhaps historically significant, are not usually perceived as important to the visual character of the building. Thus we do not take them into account in the visual understanding of the building.

**Shape** The shape of a building can be an important aspect of its overall visual character. The building illustrated here, for example, has a distinctive horizontal box-like shape with the middle portion of the box projecting up an extra story. This building has other visual aspects that help define its overall character, including the pattern of vertical bands of windows, the decorative horizontal bands which separate the base of the building from the upper floors, the dark brown color of the brick, the large arched entranceway, and the castle-like tower behind the building.

**Openings** The opening illustrated here dominates the visual character of this building because of its size, shape, location, materials, and craftsmanship. Because of its relation to the generous staircase, this opening places a strong emphasis on the principal entry to the building. Enclosing this arcade-like entry with glass, for example, would materially and visually change the character of the building.

**Roof and Related Features** This building has a number of character-defining aspects which include the windows and the decorative stonework, but certainly the roof and its related features are visually important to its overall visual character. The roof is not only highly visible, it has elaborate stone dormers, and it also has decorative metalwork and slatework. The red and black slates of differing sizes and shapes are laid in patterns that extend around the roof of this large and freestanding building. Any changes to this patterned slatework, or to the other roofing details would damage the visual character of the building.

**Roof and Related Features** On this building, the most important visual aspects of its character are the roof and its related features, such as the dormers and chimneys. The roof is important to the visual character because its steepness makes it highly visible, and its prominence is reinforced by the patterned tinwork, the six dormers and the two chimneys. Changes to the roof or its features, such as removal or alterations to the dormers, for example, would certainly change the character of this building. This does not discount the importance of its other aspects, such as the porch, the windows, the brickwork, or its setting; but the roof is clearly crucial to understanding the overall visual character of this building as seen from a distance.

**Projections** A projecting porch or balcony can be very important to the overall visual character of almost any building and to the district in which it is located. It would seriously affect the character to remove the balcony, to enclose it, or to replace it with a balcony lacking the same degree of detail of the original material.

**Trim** If one were to analyze the overall shape or form of this building, it would be seen that it is a gable-roofed house with dormers and a wrap-around porch. It is similar to many other houses of the period. It is the wooden trim on the eaves and around the porch that gives this building its own identity and its special visual character. Although such wooden trim is vulnerable to the

elements, and must be kept painted to prevent deterioration; the loss of this trim would seriously damage the overall visual character of this building, and its loss would obliterate much of the close-up visual character so dependent upon craftsmanship for the moldings, carvings, and the see-through jigsaw work. Setting Even architecturally modest buildings frequently will have a setting that contributes to their overall character. In this very urban district, setbacks are the exception, so that the small front yard is something of a luxury, and it is important to the overall character because of its design and materials, which include the iron fence along the sidewalk, the curved walk leading to the porch, and the various plantings. In a district where parking spaces are in great demand, such front yards are sometimes converted to off-street parking, but in this instance, that would essentially destroy its setting and would drastically change the visual character of this historic property. In this instance, the variety and arrangement of the materials is important in defining the visual character, starting with the large pieces of broken stone which form the projecting base for the building walls, then changing to a wall of roughly rectangular stones which vary in size, color, and texture, all with accentuated, projecting beads of mortar, then there is a rather precise and narrow band of cut and dressed stones with minimal mortar joints, and finally, the main building walls are composed of bricks, rather uniform in color, with fairly generous mortar joints. It is the juxtaposition and variety of these materials and of course, the craftsmanship that is very important to the visual character. As seen here, the craft details are especially noticeable because the stones are all of a uniform color, and they are all squared off, but their surfaces were worked with differing tools and techniques to create a great variety of textures, resulting in a tour-de-force of craft details. This texture is very important at close range. It was a deliberately contrived surface that is an important contributor to the visual character of this building.

**Individually Important Spaces** In assessing the interior visual character of any historic building, it is necessary to ask whether there are spaces that are important to the character of this particular building, whether the building is architecturally rich or modest, or even if it is a simple or utilitarian structure. The character of the individually important space, which is illustrated here, is a combination of its size, the twin curving staircases, the massive columns and curving vaulted ceilings, in addition to the quality of the materials in the floor and in the stairs. If the ceiling were to be lowered to provide space for heating ducts, or if the stairways were to be enclosed for code reasons, the shape and character of this space would be damaged, even if there was no permanent physical damage. Such changes can easily destroy the visual character of an individually important interior space.

**Related Spaces** Many buildings have interior spaces that are visually or physically related so that, as you move through them, they are perceived not as separate spaces, but as a sequence of related spaces that are important in defining the interior character of the building. The example which is illustrated here consists of two spaces that are visually linked to each other. The top photo shows a vestibule which is of a generous size and unusual in its own right, but more important, it visually relates to the staircase off of it. The stairway, bottom photo, is the second part of this sequence of related spaces, and it provides continuing access to the upper floors. These related spaces are very important in defining the interior character of this building. Almost any change to these spaces, such as installing doors between the vestibule and the hallway, or enclosing the stair would seriously impact their character and the way that character is perceived.

**Interior Features** Interior features are three-dimensional building elements or architectural details that are an integral part of the building as opposed to furniture. Interior features are often important in defining the character of an individual room or space. In some instances, an interior feature, like a large and ornamental open stairway may dominate the visual character of an entire building. In other instances, a modest iron stairway like the one illustrated here may be an important interior feature, and its preservation would be crucial to preserving the interior character of the building. Such features can also include the obvious things like fireplace mantles, plaster ceiling medallions, or paneling, but they also extend to features like hardware, lighting fixtures, bank teller cages, decorative elevator doors, etc.

**Surface Materials and Finishes** When identifying the visual character of historic interior spaces one should not overlook the importance of those materials and finishes that comprise the surfaces of walls, floors and ceilings. The surfaces may have evidence of either handcraft or machine made products that are important contributors to the visual character, including patterned or inlaid designs in the wood flooring, decorative painting practices such as stenciling, imitation marble or woodgrain, wallpapering, tinwork, tile floors, etc. The example illustrated here

involves a combination of real marble at the base of the column, imitation marble patterns on the plaster surface of the column a practice called scagliola, and a tile floor surface that uses small mosaic tiles arranged to form geometric designs in several different colors. While such decorative materials and finishes may be important in defining the interior visual character of this particular building, it should be remembered that in much more modest buildings, the plainness of surface materials and finishes may be an essential aspect of their historic character. This is true of brickwork, for example, which can be irreversibly damaged with inappropriate cleaning techniques or by insensitive repointing practices. At least two factors are important contributors to the visual character of brickwork, namely the brick itself and the craftsmanship. Between these, there are many more aspects worth noting, such as color range of bricks, size and shape variations, texture, bonding patterns, together with the many variable qualities of the mortar joints, such as color, width of joint and tooling. These qualities could be easily damaged by painting the brick, by raking out the joint with power tools, or repointing with a joint that is too wide. As seen here during the process of repointing, the visual character of this front wall is being dramatically changed from a wall where the bricks predominate, to a wall that is visually dominated by the mortar joints. Conclusion Using this three-step approach, it is possible to conduct a walkthrough and identify all those elements and features that help define the visual character of the building. In most cases, there are a number of aspects about the exterior and interior that are important to the character of an historic building. The visual emphasis of this brief will make it possible to ascertain those things that should be preserved because their loss or alteration would diminish or destroy aspects of the historic character whether on the outside, or on the inside of the building. The use of this checklist involves the three-step process of looking for:

*Characters in architecture is comparable with the attributes of an individual. If a building is designed in the proper spirit, personal characteristics such as grace, dignity and vitality can be expressed as an integral part of the structure.*

English cathedrals - Horizontal, diverse styles, extending plan, large crossing tower perhaps with spire, two towers at front German cathedrals - Massive, block-like, broad plan, octagonal cupola at crossing, multi-towered, one or two tall spires in Gothic period Spanish cathedrals - Spacious, ornate, complex plan, diverse roofline, two towers at west front Note This summary does not preclude the diversity which occurred at different dates for a variety of reasons. One of the influences on diversity of style was the immigration of master masons who often served as architects. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod , had as many as 13 domes, differing in this regard from their mainly single-cupola Byzantine predecessors. The architects of Vladimir-Suzdal switched from brick to white limestone ashlar as their main building material, which provided for dramatically effective church silhouettes, but made church construction very costly. After a century of Byzantine imitations, the Russian masons began to emphasise the verticality in church design. The late 12th century saw the development of so-called tower churches in Polotsk and Smolensk ; this design later spread to other areas such as Kiev and Chernihiv. A visual transition between the main cube of the church and the elongated cylinder below the dome was provided by one or several rows of curved corbel arches, known as kokoshniki. A still later development was the introduction of a long conical roof known as " tent-like ". The 17th century was marked by the return to the traditional Byzantine model of cathedral and katholikon architecture, with four or six piers supporting the vaults. The six-piered cathedrals were reserved for the most important cities and monasteries. The exterior ornamentation is often limited to a modicum of blind arcading. The large bulbous domes are usually set on tall drums pierced by long narrow windows. This austerity of cathedral architecture contrasts with the continuing experimentation in the design of ordinary parish churches. An early Novgorodian katholikon , A classical Russian cathedral from ca. Early and late Gothic, Gothic Revival and 20th century sit side by side in a single building. The present cathedral is a fine example of pre-Victorian Gothic Revival architecture. Roskilde Cathedral , Denmark, c. The long sloping roof and tall wood and copper spire is typical of Norway. The massive western towers with their wooden spires are typical of Romanesque throughout Northern Europe. The architecture of this building was widely influential. Modelled after French examples but with only one tower. Vitus Cathedral , Czech Republic, This ornate Gothic cathedral was left incomplete in the medieval period, and continued in the Gothic style in the 19th century. Some Baroque features appear, such as the landmark spire of the southern tower. Superficially this monastic building presents a standard West Front with twin towers framing a gabled end. But this is a Baroque Cathedral. The towers are framing the apsidal eastern end in the manner of a German Romanesque church. Every detail has a curving playful quality typical of the Baroque style which spread throughout central and eastern Europe. Traces of the original medieval building survive within. The remainder mostly dates from the 17th and 18th centuries. The spire was added in

## Chapter 3 : List of regional characteristics of European cathedral architecture - Wikipedia

*17 PRESERVATION BRIEFS Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character* Lee H. Nelson, FAIA.

Every old building is unique, with its own identity and its own distinctive character. Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic building. Character-defining elements include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. Character-defining features at the Wakamiya Inari Shrine include the o-mune ridge beam, chigi X-shaped elements along the top of the ridge and katsuyoi barrel-shaped pieces that run horizontally along the ridge. Photo by Alec Freeman

There are different ways of understanding old buildings. Buildings can be studied as examples of using specific materials such as concrete, wood, steel, or limestone. They can also be considered as examples of an historical period, which is often related to a specific architectural style, such as Gothic Revival farmhouses, one-story bungalows, or Art Deco apartment buildings. There are many other facets of an historic building besides its functional type, its materials or construction or style that contribute to its historic qualities or significance. Some of these qualities are feelings conveyed by the sense of time and place or in buildings associated with events or people. A complete understanding of any property may require documentary research about its style, construction, function, its furnishings or contents; knowledge about the original builder, owners, and later occupants; and knowledge about the evolutionary history of the building. Even though buildings may be of historic, rather than architectural significance, it is their tangible elements that embody its significance for association with specific events or persons and it is those tangible elements both on the exterior and interior that should be preserved. A three-step approach can be used to identify those materials, features and spaces that contribute to the visual character of a building. This approach involves first examining the building from afar to understand its overall setting and architectural context; then moving up very close to appreciate its materials and the craftsmanship and surface finishes evident in these materials; and then going into and through the building to perceive those spaces, rooms and details that comprise its interior visual character.

**Identify the Overall Visual Aspects** Identifying the overall visual character of a building is looking at its distinguishing physical aspects without focusing on its details.

**Visual Character at Close Range** Look at the building at close range, where it is possible to see all the surface qualities of the materials, such as their color and texture, or surface evidence of craftsmanship or age. In some instances, the visual character is the result of the juxtaposition of materials that are contrastingly different in their color and texture. The surface qualities of the materials may be important because they impart the very sense of craftsmanship and age that distinguishes historic buildings from other buildings. Furthermore, many of these close up qualities can be easily damaged or obscured by work that affects those surfaces.

**Identify the Visual Character of Interior Spaces, Features and Finishes** To understand the interior character, it is necessary to move through the spaces one at a time. While it is not difficult to perceive the character of one individual room, it becomes more difficult to deal with spaces that are interconnected and interrelated. Sometimes, as in office buildings, it is the vestibules or lobbies or corridors that are important to the interior character of the building. Using this three-step approach, it is possible to conduct a walk through and identify all those elements and features that help define the visual character of the building. In most cases, there are a number of aspects about the exterior and interior that are important to the character of an historic building. The visual emphasis will make it possible to ascertain those things that should be preserved because their loss or alteration would diminish or destroy aspects of the historic character whether on the outside, or on the inside of the building.

### Chapter 4 : Home Style Library - Find Your Home Style

*In assessing the interior visual character of any historic building, it is necessary to ask whether there are spaces that are important to the character of this particular building, whether the building is architecturally rich or modest, or even if it is a simple or utilitarian structure.*

Every building that is constructed for a specific purpose has a specific form which itself depicts its original function. The inter-connection between the interiors and the exterior of a building is essential. The true style of a building reflects the particular period in which it has been built. But not many architects agree with the above statement. Some feel that there is no virtue in designing a building that shouts its date of built. The design of a building should always remain new and vibrant to avoid boredom. Various architectural styles developed with the development in the technology. Technology brought new materials and new techniques of construction. Architects have made remarkable contributions to these styles from earlier periods to the present day. For ease, character and Style have been classified under traditional and modern architecture. Character of a Building The character of a building depends upon its capacity to express a particular function and status. In the historical styles of architecture, the function and status of a building were successfully expressed in a variety of styles. No building can have a neutral character. Similarly, a building comprises of various aspects that makes it unique and stand out. Symbolism has become a major principle of Architecture. Usually civic buildings are designed such that they convey the purpose for which they are built. All aesthetic components, such as unity, composition, contrast and scale together make up the character of a building. Character also brings out the utility and purpose of a building. Whether it is a bank or a church or a library, it should possess an appropriate character and not something weird. Zaha Hadid designed a Hotel. The Hotel did not have the character of its purpose, instead it ended up looking like a museum. This should not be done. It disturbs the harmony of the functioning of the building. The connectivity between the interior functions and the exterior look should be inter-connected. Architectural Character of a Building has three basic characters: Functional Character Associated Character Personal Character In our next article, we will discuss three basic characters of building. That will help us understand the importance of the character of a structure.

## Chapter 5 : "Architectural space as a constituent of architectural character" by Mulugeta Metaferia

*Develop architectural features, materials and detailing appropriate for the Facility Group designation. Create and promote a consistent architectural theme through the recurring features of individual buildings such as roofs, doors and windows, and materials.*

Every old building is unique, with its own identity and its own distinctive character. Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic building. Character-defining elements include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. The purpose of this Brief is to help the owner or the architect identify those features or elements that give the building its visual character and that should be taken into account in order to preserve them to the maximum extent possible. There are different ways of understanding old buildings. Buildings can be studied as examples of using specific materials such as concrete, wood, steel, or limestone. They can also be considered as examples of an historical period, which is often related to a specific architectural style, such as Gothic Revival farmhouses, one-story bungalows, or Art Deco apartment buildings. There are many other facets of an historic building besides its functional type, its materials or construction or style that contribute to its historic qualities or significance. Some of these qualities are feelings conveyed by the sense of time and place or in buildings associated with events or people. A complete understanding of any property may require documentary research about its style, construction, function, its furnishings or contents; knowledge about the original builder, owners, and later occupants; and knowledge about the evolutionary history of the building. Even though buildings may be of historic, rather than architectural significance, it is their tangible elements that embody its significance for association with specific events or persons and it is those tangible elements both on the exterior and interior that should be preserved. Therefore, the approach taken in this Brief is limited to identifying those visual and tangible aspects of the historic building. While this may aid in the planning process for carrying out any ongoing or new use or restoration of the building, this approach is not a substitute for developing an understanding about the significance of an historic building and the district in which it is located. If the various materials, features and spaces that give a building its visual character are not recognized and preserved, then essential aspects of its character may be damaged in the process of change. This approach involves first examining the building from afar to understand its overall setting and architectural context; then moving up very close to appreciate its materials and the craftsmanship and surface finishes evident in these materials; and then going into and through the building to perceive those spaces, rooms and details that comprise its interior visual character. Step One involves looking at the building from a distance to understand the character of its site and setting, and it involves walking around the building where that is possible. Some buildings will have one or more sides that are more important than the others because they are more highly visible. This does not mean that the rear of the building is of no value whatever but it simply means that it is less important to the overall character. On the other hand, the rear may have an interesting back porch or offer a private garden space or some other aspect that may contribute to the visual character. Such a general approach to looking at the building and site will provide a better understanding of its overall character without having to resort to an infinitely long checklist of its possible features and details. Regardless of whether a building is complicated or relatively plain, it is these broad categories that contribute to an understanding of the overall character rather than the specifics of architectural features such as moldings and their profiles. Left Photo—Overall Visual Character: Right Photo—Overall Visual Character: Shape The shape of a building can be an important aspect of its overall visual character. The building illustrated here, for example, has a distinctive horizontal boxlike shape with the middle portion of the box projecting up an extra story. This building has other visual aspects that help define its overall character, including the pattern of vertical bands of windows, the decorative horizontal bands which separate the base of the building from the upper floors, the dark brown color of the brick, the large arched entranceway, and the castle-like tower behind the building. Openings The opening illustrated here dominates the visual character of this building because of its size,

shape, location, materials, and craftsmanship. Because of its relation to the generous staircase, this opening places a strong emphasis on the principal entry to the building. Enclosing this arcade-like entry with glass, for example, would materially and visually change the character of the building.

**Roof and Related Features** This building pictured on the left has a number of character-defining aspects which include the windows and the decorative stonework, but certainly the roof and its related features are visually important to its overall visual character. The roof is not only highly visible, it has elaborate stone dormers, and it also has decorative metalwork and slatework. The red and black slates of differing sizes and shapes are laid in patterns that extend around the roof of this large and freestanding building. Any changes to this patterned slatework, or to the other roofing details would damage the visual character of the building.

**Roof and Related Features** On this building pictured on the right, the most important visual aspects of its character are the roof and its related features, such as the dormers and chimneys. The roof is important to the visual character because its steepness makes it highly visible, and its prominence is reinforced by the patterned tinwork, the six dormers and the two chimneys. Changes to the roof or its features, such as removal or alterations to the dormers, for example, would certainly change the character of this building. This does not discount the importance of its other aspects, such as the porch, the windows, the brickwork, or its setting; but the roof is clearly crucial to understanding the overall visual character of this building as seen from a distance.

**Middle Photo** Overall Visual Character: Projections A projecting porch or balcony can be very important to the overall visual character of almost any building and to the district in which it is located. It would seriously affect the character to remove the balcony, to enclose it, or to replace it with a balcony lacking the same degree of detail of the original material.

**Trim** If one were to analyze the overall shape or form of this building, it would be seen that it is a gable-roofed house with dormers and a wrap-around porch. It is similar to many other houses of the period. It is the wooden trim on the eaves and around the porch that gives this building its own identity and its special visual character. Although such wooden trim is vulnerable to the elements, and must be kept painted to prevent deterioration; the loss of this trim would seriously damage the overall visual character of this building, and its loss would obliterate much of the closeup visual character so dependent upon craftsmanship for the moldings, carvings, and the see-through jigsaw work.

**Setting** Even architecturally modest buildings frequently will have a setting that contributes to their overall character. In this very urban district, setbacks are the exception, so that the small front yard is something of a luxury, and it is important to the overall character because of its design and materials, which include the iron fence along the sidewalk, the curved walk leading to the porch, and the various plantings. In a district where parking spaces are in great demand, such front yards are sometimes converted to off-street parking, but in this instance, that would essentially destroy its setting and would drastically change the visual character of this historic property. In some instances, the visual character is the result of the juxtaposition of materials that are contrastingly different in their color and texture. The surface qualities of the materials may be important because they impart the very sense of craftsmanship and age that distinguishes historic buildings from other buildings. Furthermore, many of these close up qualities can be easily damaged or obscured by work that affects those surfaces. Examples of this could include painting previously unpainted masonry, rotary disk sanding of smooth wood siding to remove paint, abrasive cleaning of tooled stonework, or repointing reddish mortar joints with gray portland cement. In this instance, the variety and arrangement of the materials is important in defining the visual character, starting with the large pieces of broken stone which form the projecting base for the building walls, then changing to a wall of roughly rectangular stones which vary in size, color, and texture, all with accentuated, projecting beads of mortar, then there is a rather precise and narrow band of cut and dressed stones with minimal mortar joints, and finally, the main building walls are composed of bricks, rather uniform in color, with fairly generous mortar joints. It is the juxtaposition and variety of these materials and of course, the craftsmanship that is very important to the visual character. As seen here, the craft details are especially noticeable because the stones are all of a uniform color, and they are all squared off, but their surfaces were worked with differing tools and techniques to create a great variety of textures, resulting in a tour-de-force of craft details. This texture is very important at close range. It was a deliberately contrived surface that is an important contributor to the visual character of this building.

**Interior Features** Perceiving the character of interior spaces can be somewhat more

difficult than dealing with the exterior. In part, this is because so much of the exterior can be seen at one time and it is possible to grasp its essential character rather quickly. To understand the interior character, Step Three says it is necessary to move through the spaces one at a time. While it is not difficult to perceive the character of one individual room, it becomes more difficult to deal with spaces that are interconnected and interrelated. Sometimes, as in office buildings, it is the vestibules or lobbies or corridors that are important to the interior character of the building. With other groups of buildings the visual qualities of the interior are related to the plan of the building, as in a church with its axial plan creating a narrow tunnel-like space which obviously has a different character than an open space like a sports pavilion. Thus the shape of the space may be an essential part of its character. With some buildings it is possible to perceive that there is a visual linkage in a sequence of spaces, as in a hotel, from the lobby to the grand staircase to the ballroom. Closing off the openings between those spaces would change the character from visually linked spaces to a series of closed spaces. For example, in a house that has a front and back parlor linked with an open archway, the two rooms are perceived together, and this visual relationship is part of the character of the building. To close off the open archway would change the character of such a residence. The importance of interior features and finishes to the character of the building should not be overlooked. In relatively simple rooms, the primary visual aspects may be in features such as fireplace mantels, lighting fixtures or wooden floors. In some rooms, the absolute plainness is the character-defining aspect of the interior. So-called secondary spaces also may be important in their own way, from the standpoint of history or because of the family activities that occurred in those rooms. Such secondary spaces, while perhaps historically significant, are not usually perceived as important to the visual character of the building. Thus we do not take them into account in the visual understanding of the building.

**Individually Important Spaces** In assessing the interior visual character of any historic building, it is necessary to ask whether there are spaces that are important to the character of this particular building, whether the building is architecturally rich or modest, or even if it is a simple or utilitarian structure. The character of the individually important space, which is illustrated here, is a combination of its size, the twin curving staircases, the massive columns and curving vaulted ceilings, in addition to the quality of the materials in the floor and in the stairs. If the ceiling were to be lowered to provide space for heating ducts, or if the stairways were to be enclosed for code reasons, the shape and character of this space would be damaged, even if there was no permanent physical damage. Such changes can easily destroy the visual character of an individually important interior space.

**Related Spaces Interior Visual Character: Related Spaces** Many buildings have interior spaces that are visually or physically related so that, as you move through them, they are perceived not as separate spaces, but as a sequence of related spaces that are important in defining the interior character of the building. The example which is illustrated here consists of two spaces that are visually linked to each other. The photo shows a vestibule which is of a generous size and unusual in its own right, but more important, it visually relates to the staircase off of it. The stairway, bottom photo, is the second part of this sequence of related spaces, and it provides continuing access to the upper floors. These related spaces are very important in defining the interior character of this building. Almost any change to these spaces, such as installing doors between the vestibule and the hallway, or enclosing the stair would seriously impact their character and the way that character is perceived.

**Interior Features Interior Visual Character: Interior Features** Interior features are three-dimensional building elements or architectural details that are an integral part of the building as opposed to furniture. Interior features are often important in defining the character of an individual room or space. In some instances, an interior feature, like a large and ornamental open stairway may dominate the visual character of an entire building. In other instances, a modest iron stairway like the one illustrated here may be an important interior feature, and its preservation would be crucial to preserving the interior character of the building. Such features can also include the obvious things like fireplace mantels, plaster ceiling medallions, or paneling, but they also extend to features like hardware, lighting fixtures, bank tellers cages, decorative elevator doors, etc.

**Surface Materials and Finishes** When identifying the visual character of historic interior spaces one should not overlook the importance of those materials and finishes that comprise the surfaces of walls, floors and ceilings. The surfaces may have evidence of either handcraft or machine made products that are important contributors to the visual character, including patterned or inlaid designs in the

wood flooring, decorative painting practices such as stenciling, imitation marble or wood grain, wallpapering, tinwork, tile floors, etc. The example illustrated here involves a combination of real marble at the base of the column, imitation marble patterns on the plaster surface of the column a practice called scagliola, and a tile floor surface that uses small mosaic tiles arranged to form geometric designs in several different colors. While such decorative materials and finishes may be important in defining the interior visual character of this particular building, it should be remembered that in much more modest buildings, the plainness of surface materials and finishes may be an essential aspect of their historic character. This is true of brickwork, for example, which can be irreversibly damaged with inappropriate cleaning techniques or by insensitive repointing practices. At least two factors are important contributors to the visual character of brickwork, namely the brick itself and the craftsmanship. Between these, there are many more aspects worth noting, such as color range of bricks, size and shape variations, texture, bonding patterns, together with the many variable qualities of the mortar joints, such as color, width of joint and tooling. These qualities could be easily damaged by painting the brick, by raking out the joint with power tools, or repointing with a joint that is too wide. As seen here during the process of repointing, the visual character of this front wall is being dramatically changed from a wall where the bricks predominate, to a wall that is visually dominated by the mortar joints.

### Chapter 6 : Architectural Characters of a Building | Architecture Student Chronicles

*Architectural style constitutes a mode of classifying architecture largely by morphological characteristics in terms of form, techniques, materials, etc. Style is the way or type (a manner in which a character is expressed in a particular way).*

### Chapter 7 : Architecture | Define Architecture at calendrierdelascience.com

*Architectural Character The architecture displayed in Duke's architecture represent far more than just Collegiate Gothic and Georgian styles, with a variety of modern and contemporary structures that build upon the architectural heritage of the University with varying degrees of success.*

### Chapter 8 : About Your Privacy on this Site

*For ease, character and Style have been classified under traditional and modern architecture. Character of a Building The character of a building depends upon its capacity to express a particular function and status.*

### Chapter 9 : Housing project that changes the architectural character of Paris

*Buy Something with 'Architectural Character' Says Designer Natalia Miyar The London- and Miami-based designer says for a place to feel luxurious, it has to be one of a kind.*