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## Lesson Two: Victorian Architecture



### Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Define architecture
- Explain what an architect does
- Identify the characteristics of Victorian architecture
- Determine what features of a building are decorative and what are functional





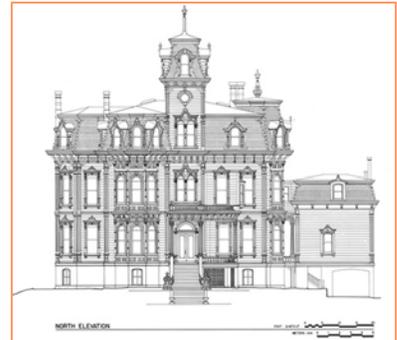
## Pre-tour Activity 1: Buildings Have Style

### Materials

- Transparencies made of the architectural drawings of the Governor's Mansion front exterior
- "Victorian Architecture" handout
- "Buildings Have Style" worksheet
- "Governor's Mansion" coloring worksheet

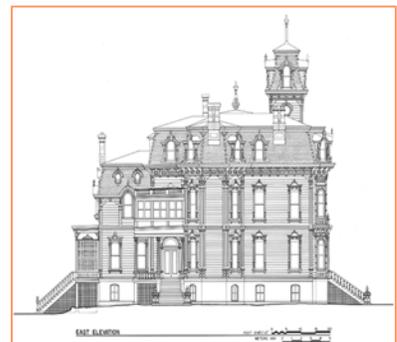
### Instructional Procedures

1. Have each student bring in a picture of a house from a magazine, newspaper, etc. Display them where the whole class can see them. Ask the class whether the houses are similar to or different from each other. Are there any elements that are similar for some of the houses (i.e. single story vs. two story, shape of roof, etc.)? Group houses together based on their shared characteristics.



2. Define architecture. Explain that the difference between the houses is due to their architecture or design elements. Houses built in a certain place and/or at a certain time period often have similar characteristics.

3. Show the class the architectural drawings of the Governor's Mansion. The Governor's Mansion was built in 1877 for Albert and Clemenza Gallatin. Architect Nathaniel Goodell designed the mansion in an architectural style that was popular at the time. The architectural style of the mansion is called Second Empire Italianate. Is this style popular today? Do you see many houses like this in your town? Looking at the architectural drawings, what do you think are some of the characteristics of Victorian architecture?



4. Have the students read the handout "Victorian Architecture" and complete the worksheet "Buildings Have Style."
5. Victorian mansions, like the Governor's Mansion, were built to showcase the wealth and social position of their owners. With their detailed design work on the exterior and vibrant colors, Victorian mansions were more recently known as the "painted ladies." Originally the exterior color scheme of the Governor's Mansion was mustard with sage green trim and a red roof. Later, as building styles changed, the house was painted entirely white. If you lived in the Governor's Mansion what colors would you have painted it? Complete the Governor's Mansion coloring worksheet.

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## Victorian Architecture

The designing and building of structures is called architecture. It is both a science and an art, and it has many styles or ways of combining the many elements that make the building attractive and useful.

Victorian architecture, named during the reign of England's Queen Victoria (1837-1901), became popular in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. Many people in this era regarded their homes as status symbols. Building a large, impressive house was a measure of success and social prominence. Victorian houses were designed with entertaining and hospitality in mind.



*unique windows*

Most Victorian houses had distinctive color schemes and exterior features, including mansard roofs, curves, arches, fancy brackets, columns, and unique and large windows. The Governor's Mansion was first painted mustard yellow with sage-green trim.

The interiors of Victorian houses were elaborately decorated and filled to the brim with fancy furniture. Carved and painted moldings and plaster wall decorations caught the light from gas and kerosene lamps.

It was typical to see floral carpets, large-patterned and multi-colored wallpaper, velvet and lace curtains, overstuffed chairs, tufted ottomans, marble-topped tables, candelabras, chandeliers, and carved sideboards. One might also see many potted plants, bronze statues, marble figures, and works of art.

During this time period, a growing wealthy class of people developed and built large Victorian houses as a show of their wealth and social status. Yet not everyone lived in an impressive Victorian house. Smaller houses with Victorian features were built for a growing population.



*fancy brackets*



*carriage house cupola*



*curves and column*



*carved fireplace*

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# Buildings Have Style

*Directions: Read the selection “Victorian Architecture” and complete the following. Write answers in complete sentences.*

1. What is architecture?

*Architecture is the designing and building of structures.*

2. When did Victorian architecture become popular in the United States?

*Victorian architecture was popular in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.*

3. Where did Victorian architecture get its name?

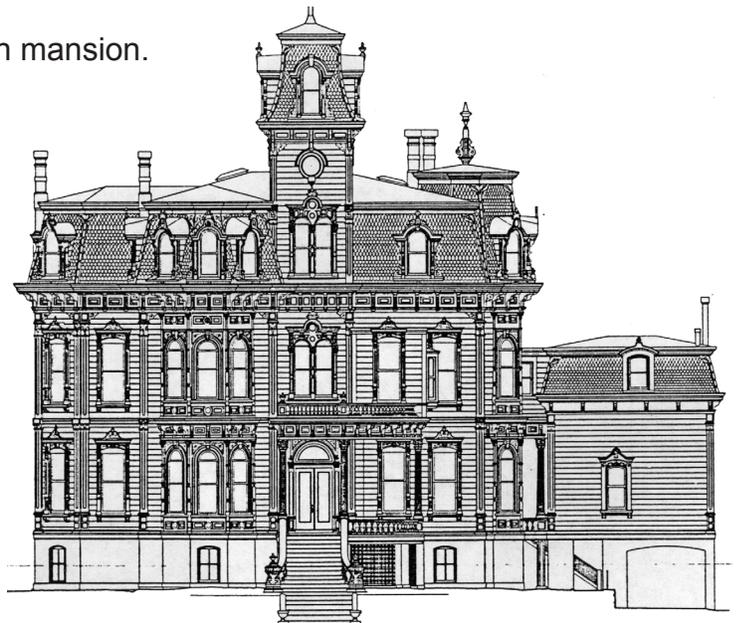
*Victorian architecture got its name from England’s Queen Victoria.*

4. How were Victorian mansions different from other houses?

*Victorian mansions were different from others because they were impressive and symbolized hospitality. They had unique features and distinctive color schemes.*

5. List at least five typical furnishings in a Victorian mansion.

*Answers may vary to include any five of the following: fancy furniture, overstuffed chairs, tufted ottomans, marble-topped tables, candelabra, chandeliers, carved sideboards, potted plants, bronze statues, marble figures, works of art.*



6. Imagine you are an architect and you are designing a house for an important person or family. Identify that family. Then write a paragraph describing the design of the house and explaining how it would be a symbol of the family's achievements. (Draw a picture of the house in the space below.)

*Answers will vary.*

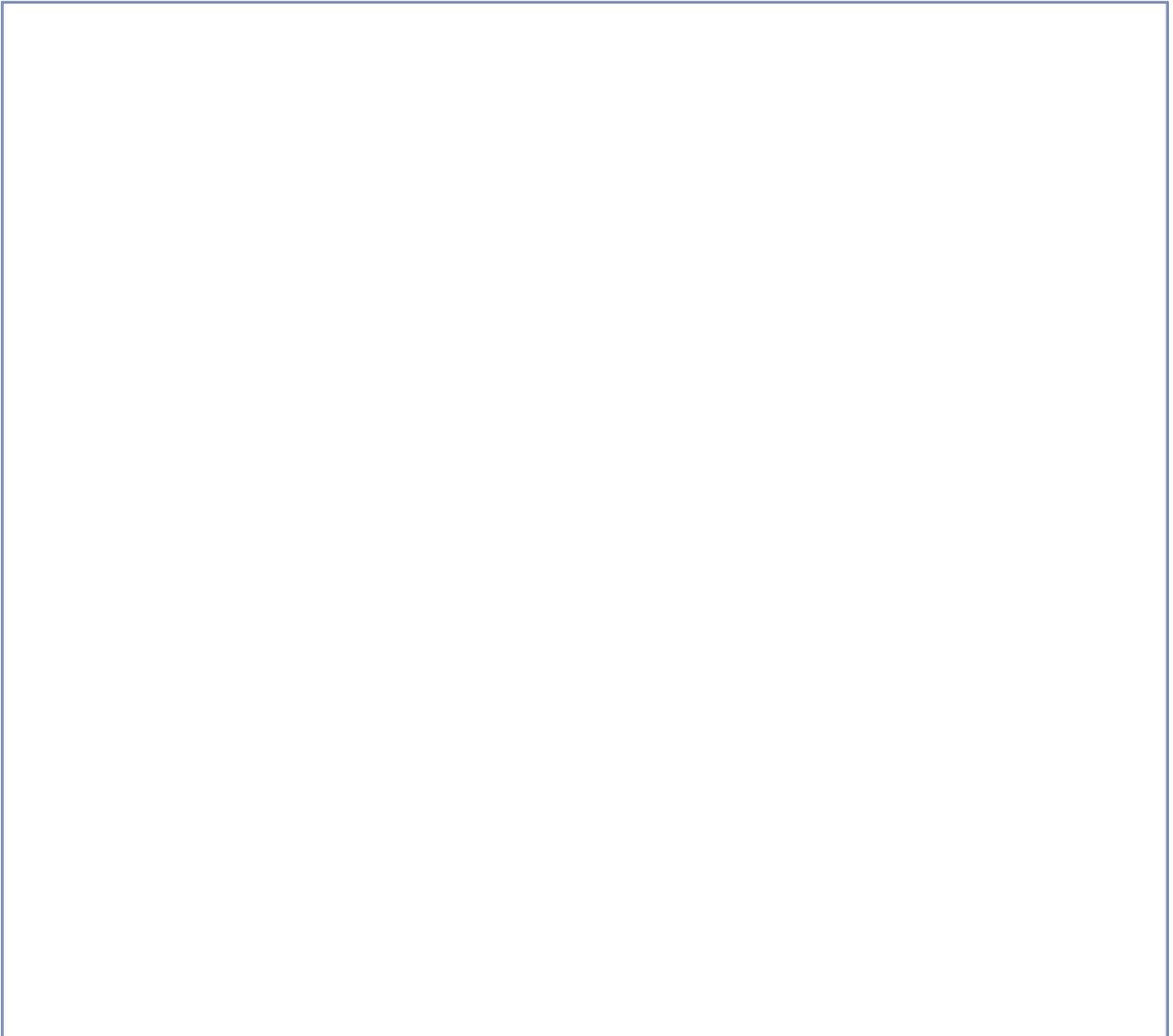
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# Governors Mansion Coloring Page





## Pre-tour Activity 2: Outside the Governor's Mansion

### Materials

- Transparency of the pen and ink drawing of the Governor's Mansion 1877 (front exterior)
- "Outside the Governor's Mansion" worksheet
- Lined paper/journal

### Instructional Procedures

1. Display the transparency of the 1877 mansion. Explain to the class that this is a drawing of the mansion built for Albert and Clemenza Gallatin in 1877. It was not a Governor's Mansion then, but was home to the Gallatins and their three children. It is an example of Victorian architecture, a style that was popular at the time.
2. Have students brainstorm answers to the following questions: Are there any mansions or houses in our community that might be called Victorian? Where are they located? Why would they be considered Victorian?
3. As a class, carefully examine the drawing. Point out to the students some of the characteristics of Victorian architecture (mansard roof, elaborate decorative features, tower or cupola, rounded windows, metal grillwork). Have the students complete the worksheet "Outside the Governor's Mansion."
4. Discuss the answers to the worksheet with the class.
5. Explain to the class that some of the features of the mansion had a practical purpose as well as being stylistic. If you answered three stories and the tower for the first question on the worksheet, look closely at the drawing again. There is actually a basement. Notice also how the mansion is built on a little hill or knoll above the street level. Why do you think the mansion was built on a knoll with a basement? Sacramento is built on a flood plain between the Sacramento and American Rivers, so houses were raised up so they wouldn't be flooded. Mansions were also built above street level to be impressive. What might be the use of the tower with its cupola? Originally a person could look west to view the Sacramento River and the arrival of cargo-carrying vessels.
6. Have the students closely examine the drawing one more time. Using what they have learned about Victorian architecture and the Governor's Mansion, have students write a paragraph on what this drawing can tell us about American culture in Sacramento in 1877.



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## Outside the Governor’s Mansion

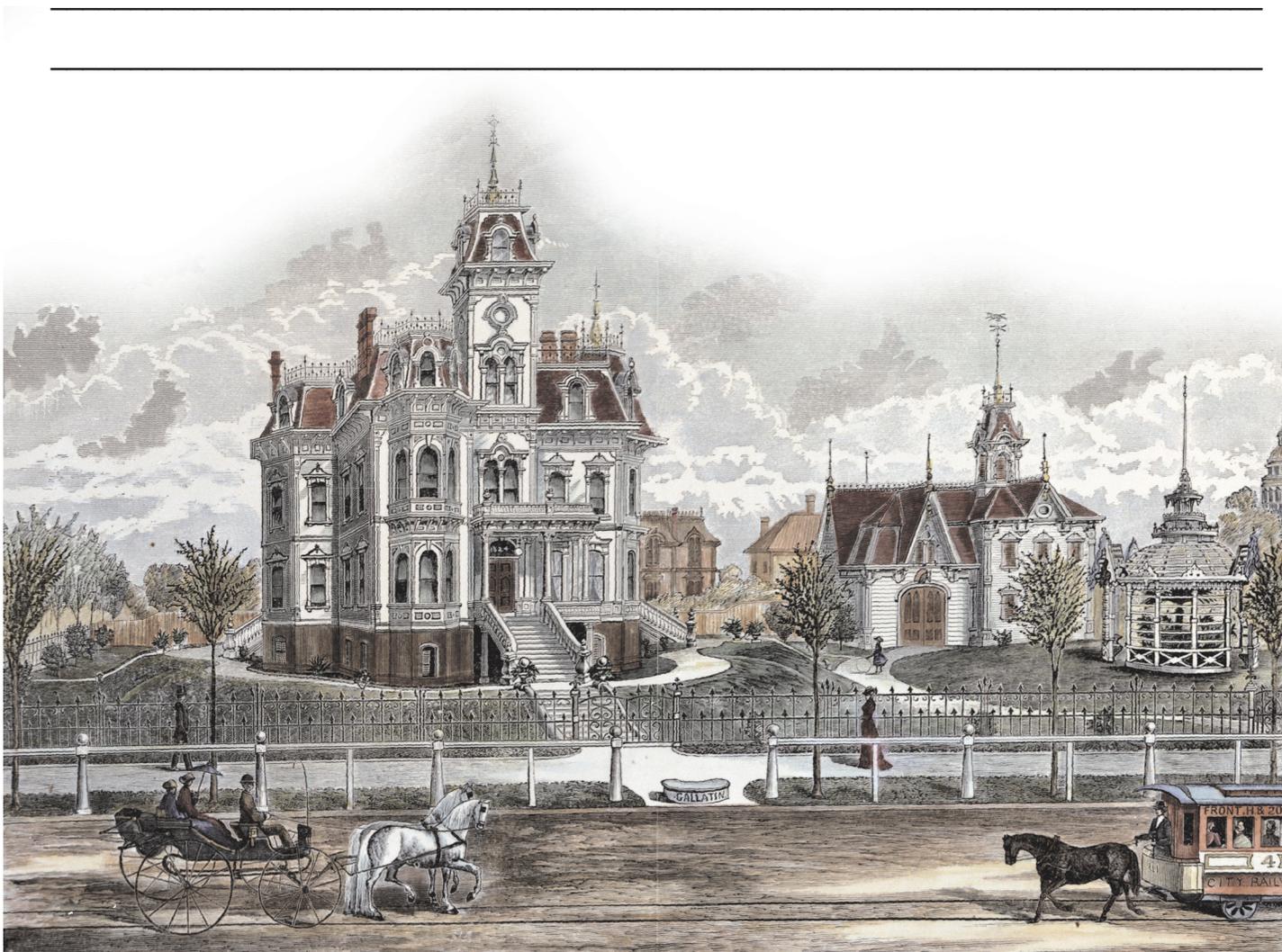
*Directions: Examine the drawing of the 1877 mansion and complete the following. Write answers in complete sentences.*

1. How many stories/floors do you see in the mansion?

*There are five stories, including the basement, first, second, and third floors, and the cupola.*

2. What kinds of rooms might you find on each floor of the mansion?

*Answers will vary depending on the students’ experiences.*



3. How many entrances do you see in the drawing? Could there be more entrances? If yes, where?

*Yes. If yes, where? A back entrance to the mansion is not visible in the drawing. The basement has two entrances, one on the west and one on the south.*

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4. Look to the right of the mansion and notice a small building with a smaller tower. What might be the use of that building?

*Answers may vary. The building to the right is the carriage house, originally used to hold horses and carriages. Later it was used as a garage.*

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5. Look further right; there is another structure. What might be its use?

*Answers may vary. The structure is a gazebo—a covered, open building in which persons can enjoy the outdoors and still be protected from the sun, rain or wind.*

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## Post-tour Activity: Reflections on the Mansion's Architecture

### Materials

- Transparency of the 1877 pen and ink drawing of the Governor's Mansion (front exterior)
- "Architectural Features" worksheet

### Instructional Procedures

1. Display the transparency of the Governor's Mansion in 1877 as a visual reference for the class.
2. Ask the class to identify the architectural features they recall seeing at the mansion. The style of roof on the mansion identifies it with a specific architectural style. What is the style of roof called? What architectural style is the mansion? What color were the shingles? Where did you see the newel post? Did anyone count the number of columns? How many columns were there outside? Inside? What were some architectural features inside the mansion that you noticed?
2. Have the students complete the "Architectural Features" worksheet, matching each architectural feature with its definition.
3. As a concluding assignment, have the students write a short essay comparing the architectural features of the Governor's Mansion with those of their own home or other places people live. They can use the glossary or an architectural dictionary for architectural terms.



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# Architectural Features

*Directions: Read the definitions of architectural features, and examine the pictures of the features. Draw a line from the definition to the feature it matches.*

Newel post—the tall and sometimes fancy carved post at the top or bottom of a stair, holding up the handrail.

Finial—the decorative part which ends the point of a spire or other item that projects upward.

Column—a slender and long structure, usually with a cylindrical shaft, a base, and a top, which is called a capital.

Shingle—a thin unit of wood, slate, tile, concrete or other material used in a series of overlapping rows to cover the roof or side of a house.

Dormer—a window covered with its own roof, which projects from the sloping roof of a house.

Cupola—a small domed structure crowning a roof or tower

