The

WHITE PINE

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Architectural Monographs

Volume XIII *Number* 2

New England Influence on NORTH CAROLINA ARCHITECTURE

NEW BERN - PART TWO

BY

Aymar Embury, II

AN

Architectural Monograph

New England Influence on NORTH CAROLINA ARCHITECTURE

NEW BERN – PART TWO

By *Aymar Embury, II*

Being the Second *Number of Volume XIII and*
THE SEVENTY-SECOND MONOGRAPH OF

THE WHITE PINE SERIES

Intimate treatiſes of the ARCHITECTURE of the *American Colonies* and of the *Early Republic* preſented with well ordered completeneſs, to further a broader underſtanding and to create a permanent Record of *Early American* ARCHITECTURE.

Russell F. Whitehead, Editor

Containing Also
Measured Drawings from the GEORGE F. LINDSAY *Collection of* Early American *Documents · The* Whole *imposingly embelliſhed by Reproductions of Beautiful Photographs by* Kenneth Clark

New York

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THE JARVIS-SLOVER HOUSE, EAST FRONT STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

New England Influence on NORTH CAROLINA ARCHITECTURE

NEW BERN—PART TWO

by AYMAR EMBURY II

THE antiquary of early American architecture will usually find himself able by mere inspection of an old house or even of a photograph of one to tell with reasonable accuracy in which of the provinces it is built; and if his acquaintance with the old work is slightly more than casual, to give the date of its construction within five or ten years. Once in a while, however, he runs across a building or group of buildings which is exceedingly puzzling; if he knows the locality in which they occur, he cannot understand how they happened to be there; and he will in some cases be able to say of the time of construction only "they *ought* to date from about 17–to 17–, but I can't say in this case exactly when they were built."

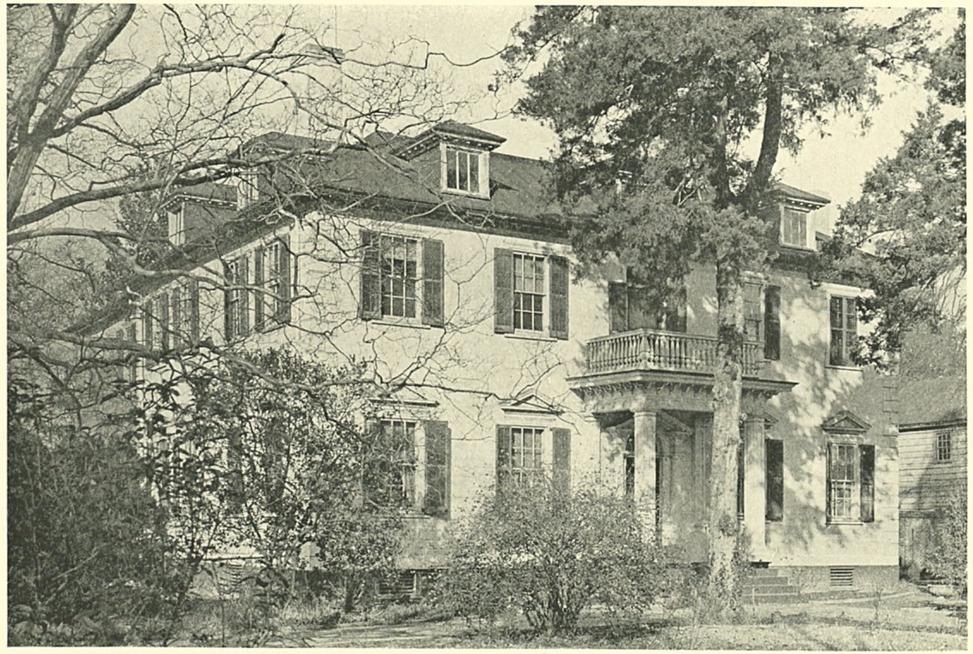
These cases are the most fascinating in the study of our early architecture; just as with the collector it is the odd piece, the freak, that commands the highest price, so in architecture it is the unusual and unexpected that arrest the attention. The piece of design, no matter how fine, that is just the solution that one might have expected of that especial problem in its particular locality at the exact date it was built, may be greatly admired for its architectural qualities, but does not arouse curiosity as does the building which makes one wonder how? and why? There are found, for example, houses of genuine Colonial design in southern Ohio, and yet everybody knows that Ohio was not settled until long after the Revolution and that a Colonial house is as little to be expected there as a Jacobean one. In Elizabeth City there still exist, or did some years ago, the decaying remnants of the oldest bank in North Carolina, a stucco, tiled roof building, which shows strong Spanish or Provencal influence; one wonders if it was designed by some emigrant from New Orleans, or if it was erected in conformity with the memories of some Huguenot refugee from southern France.

Such another town is New Bern. One would expect to find its architecture a sort of provincial copy of the great metropolis of Williamsburg, Virginia on the north, or (as Wilmington, N. C. indeed is) strongly flavored by the heavy beautiful Georgian of Charlestown; with the probability in favor of kinship with the Virginian type of Colonial, since North Carolina was settled rather through Norfolk than through Charlestown, and from the colonial period until today "the Carolinas" are much less allied to each other than North Carolina is with Virginia or South Carolina with Georgia. Actually we find its resemblance to either very slight indeed; but strangely enough, its lovely and elaborate houses, dating from the opening years of the nineteenth century would have passed without remark anywhere in New England of the late eighteenth, and they especially resemble the Salem of Samuel MacIntyre.

The illustrations in this Monograph are sufficient and convincing evidence of the truth of this statement; but the causes of the resemblance (and these must have been compelling causes) are difficult or impossible to discover. In the similar case of the little hamlet of Clinton in southeastern Georgia, the local tradition provides a satisfactory solution. Clinton has only three or four houses of any size, all very much alike, and of a workmanship far superior to the average slovenly craftsmanship of the negro slaves who furnished the mechanics in the country districts of the south before the war. The detail is much less in scale than that in any of the surrounding districts, is far more elaborate, better designed, and distinctly earlier in feeling than the period at which it was built. Inquiry revealed that Clinton was settled about 1815 by emigrants from the northern part of Vermont, in which the Colonial tradition had not yet been superseded by that of the Greek revival, and where the intelligent and thorough craftsmanship of the colonial cabinet maker still persisted. This hamlet became a sort of center for fine furniture; the few families from Vermont became wealthy from the products of their skill, and built for themselves houses as fine in design and probably larger than those they had left behind in Vermont; a few surviving chairs and

tables of austere and delicate line, of maple or mahogany or walnut, scattered about Eastern Georgia reinforce the tradition.

No such definite evidence is available in the case of New Bern. On the contrary there are several confused, conflicting and indefinite traditions as to the designers of the old houses, and even with a good deal of research exact dates cannot be assigned to the buildings themselves. The customary statement is of course that they were all pre-Revolutionary; and that they were designed by Sir Christopher Wren or one of his pupils. Sir Christopher Wren's pupils and George Washington's pew are the inevitable pleasant and ridiculous traditions current in all old towns and about all old churches; the mere fact that a church was built in 1810, while Wren died in 1723 and Washington in 1799, does not prevent the prideful custodian from pointing out the spire designed by Wren, and the pew occupied by Washington. The Washington tradition is feeble in New Bern but the Wren tradition is strong.



THE JOHN WRIGHT STANLY HOUSE, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

Another legend is that much of the later work was designed by an English architect, James Coor, who came to New Bern as a naval architect and branched out into civil work. This is plausible, but as the work bears no close resemblance to English Georgian and is very similar indeed to the late New England Colonial, the internal evidence would seem sufficient to give a negative answer to this tradition of derivation. It is of course possible that an English naval architect of some constructive skill and architectural imagination, called upon, in the absence of any more regularly trained architect, to design houses for his friends, would buy some books of design of American authorship and, following them as closely as he could, achieve approximately such houses as we find in New Bern. This is a sufficiently reasonable explanation, but based on a good many assumptions, any of which may be false; and if any one is false, the whole theory falls to the ground.

Another tradition is that the ships of New Bern departed on their voyages up the coast laden with leaf tobacco and molasses for the Salem factories to transform into smoking tobacco and rum for the pious New Englanders, and returned with furniture and wood-work, doors, mantels, and wainscot from the Salem makers. This again seems a perfectly tenable hypothesis, until we discover that the material of which the cabinet work

THE JARVIS-SLOVER HOUSE, EAST FRONT STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

up in New England, this pretty theory goes by the board. It is known that New Bern was in these early days and for many years thereafter a port from which much lumber was exported, and this may have happened; New England was already fairly well settled along the seaboard, and a lumber shortage was beginning to be felt; but even with due allowance for these

THE JUDGE DONALD HOUSE—163 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

(From an old photograph by Wooten - Moulton Studio)

things, it seems entirely improbable that New England mechanics would have used the hard brittle yellow pine for the complicated carvings so common in New Bern, when they could have and did procure for all their other work the soft, even-grained white pine.

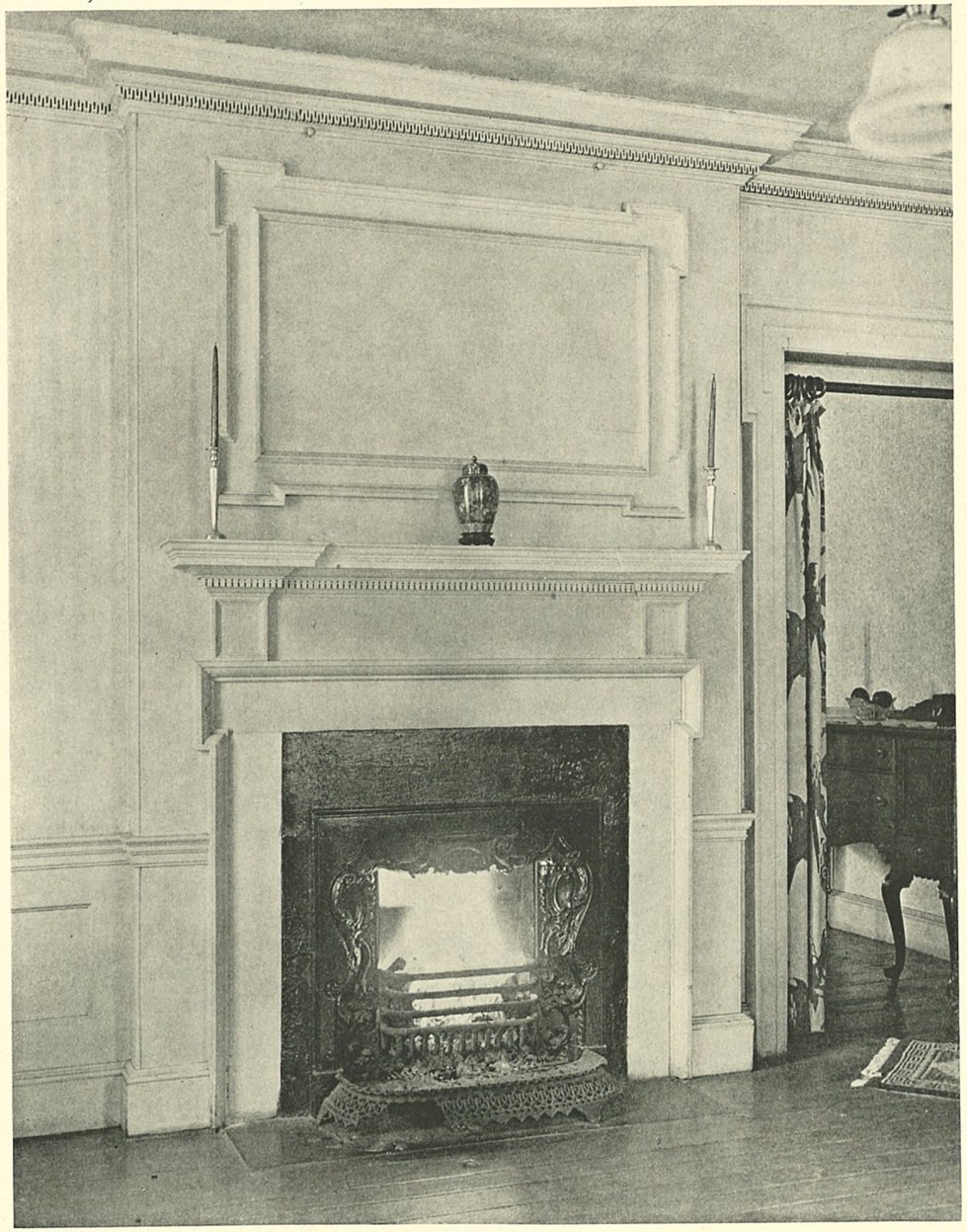
One guess as to the origin of this lovely architecture is as good as another,—'you pays your money and you takes your choice'; mine is that when the town began to grow rapidly, as it did just after the Revolution, it did what all other little cities did; used its local talent for design and construction, and the local talent used the books they could find most easily. Since the common books used in New England, instead of the English books used further to the south; and New England mechanics may have acted as foremen and instructors. That is the case in many parts of the south today, and very likely was a hundred years ago.

Whatever its genesis, we can be grateful for the results obtained in this, the most prolific in good architecture of all the little cities of the south. The town fortunately escaped the vicissitudes of the Civil war, and preserved most of its old buildings intact; and since the population and wealth have grown very slowly during the last hundred years, it has also escaped that far more deadly enemy of fine old architecture, progress. Where are our old houses in New York and Philadelphia, or Boston? Those that still survive are museums or the homes of societies; but in New Bern they are still part of the daily life of the community; not thrust forward for admiration with "Do not touch" signs, on every corner, but used as they were intended to be, warm with human life and illumined with hospitality.

ENTRANCE DETAIL—THE JUDGE DONALD HOUSE, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

MANTEL DETAIL

THE JUDGE DONALD HOUSE, 163 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



MANTEL DETAIL

THE WHITFORD HOUSE—123 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

THE DUFFY HOUSE, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

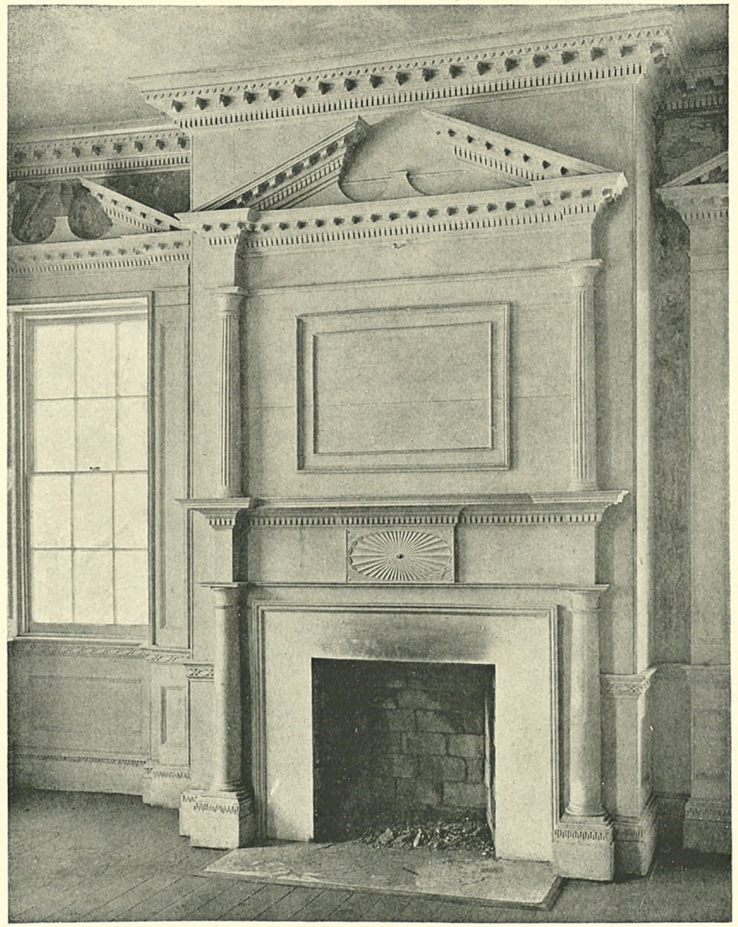
The WHITE PINE SERIES *of* EARLY AMERICAN DOCUMENTS

With MEASURED DRAWINGS *from The George F. Lindsay Collection*

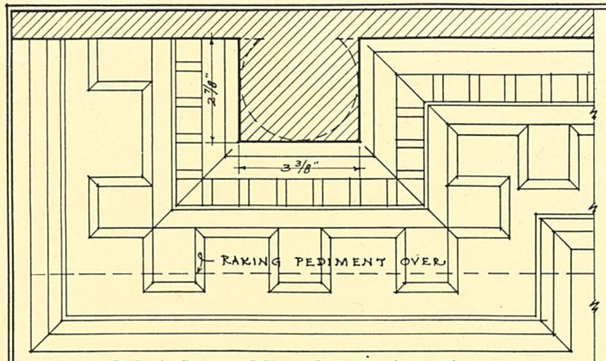
SECOND FLOOR DRAWING ROOM

THE SMALLWOOD HOUSE

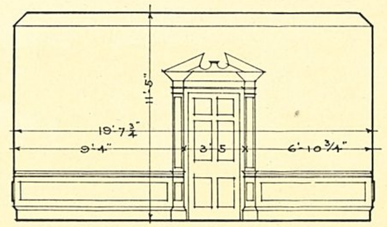
NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



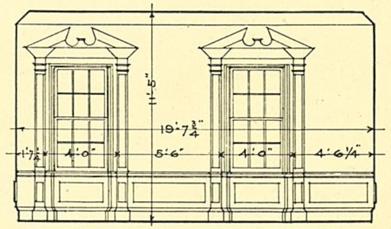
MANTEL—NORTH WALL OF DRAWING ROOM



· PLAN OF SOFFIT ·



EAST · WALL
SCALE ⅛" = 1'-0"



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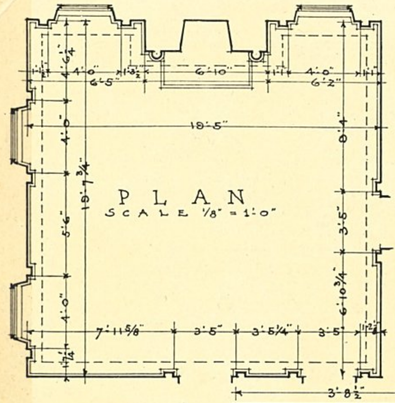

P L A N
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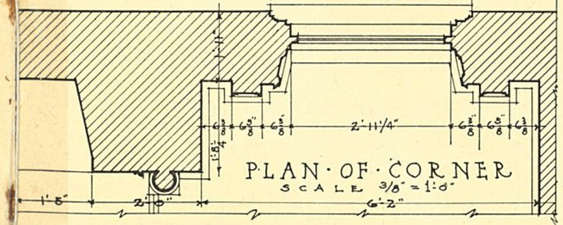
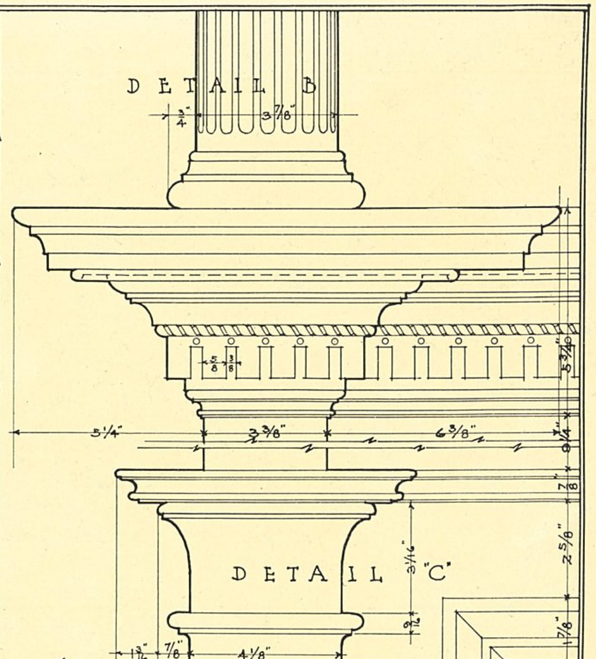
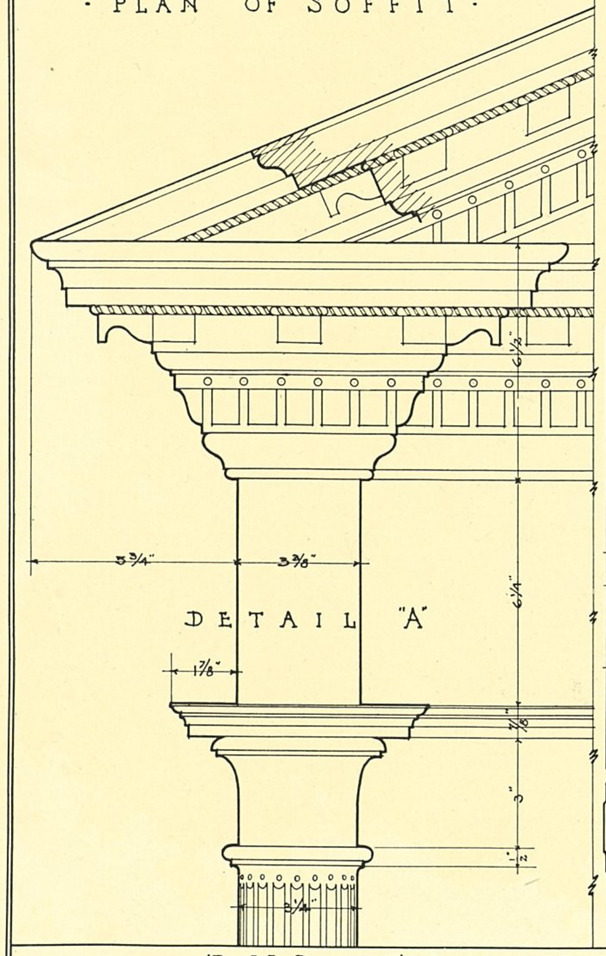


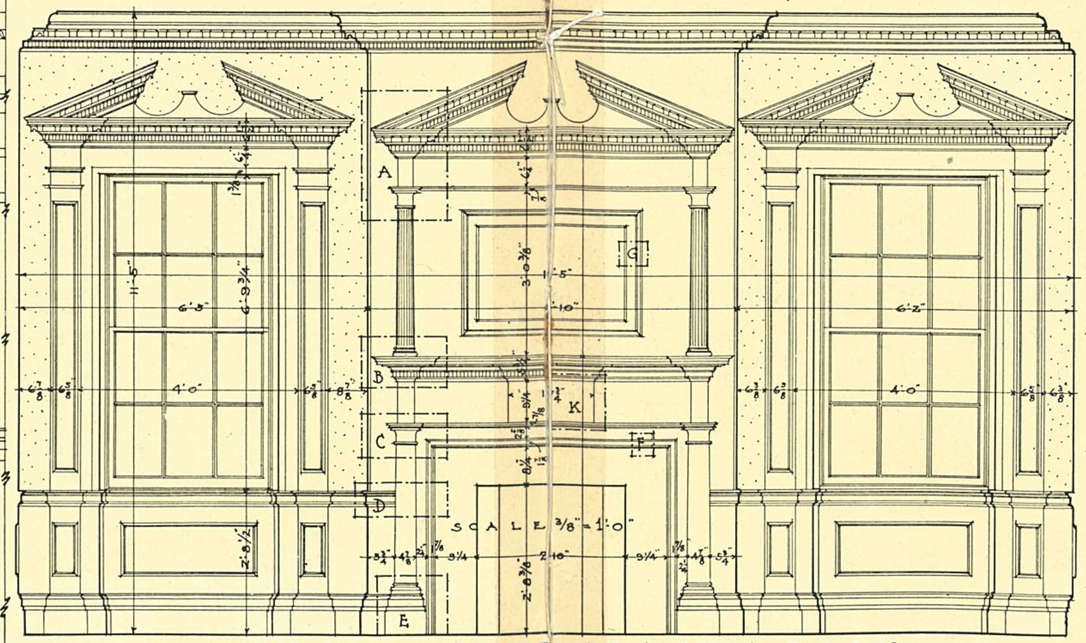
PLAN · OF · CORNER
SCALE ⅜" = 1'-0"



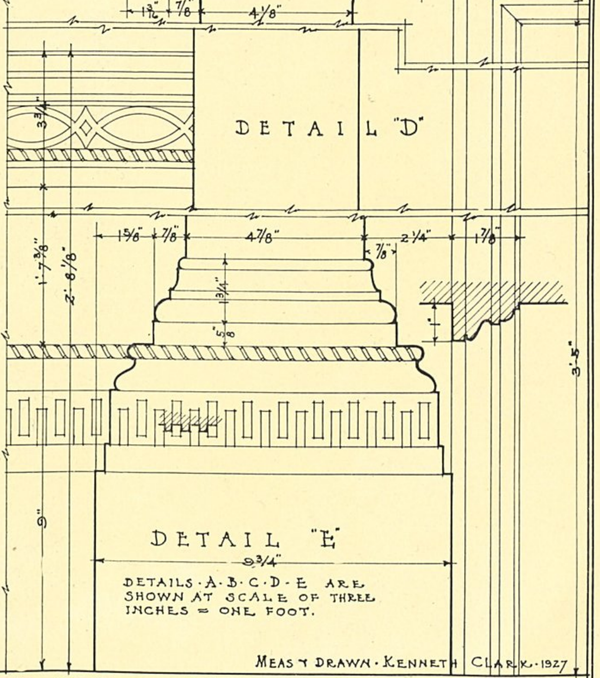
D E T A I L B



D E T A I L "A"



· NORTH · WALL · OF · DRAWING · ROOM ·



D E T A I L "D"

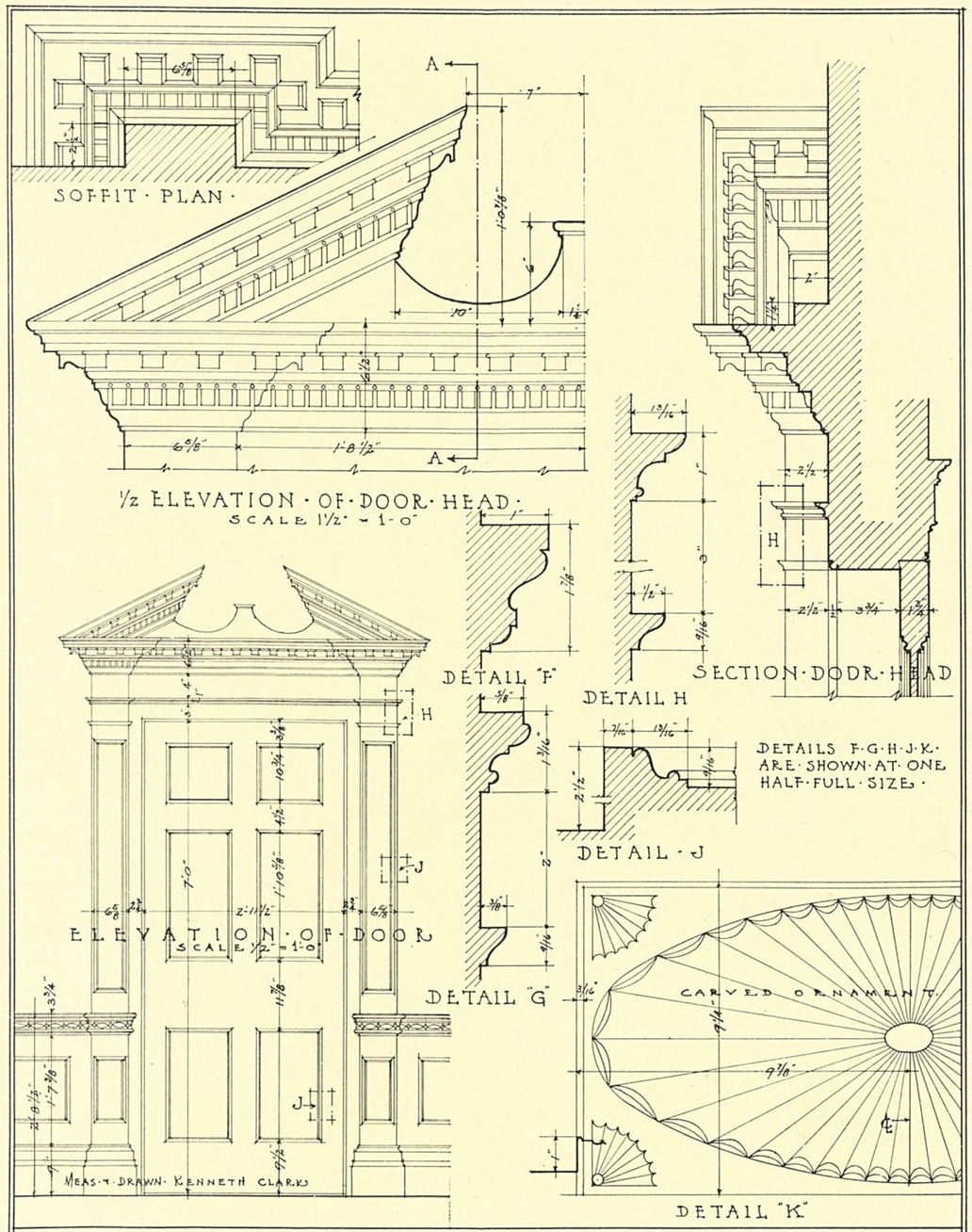
D E T A I L "E"
9¾"

DETAILS · A · B · C · D · E ARE SHOWN AT SCALE OF THREE INCHES = ONE FOOT.

MEAS'D DRAWN · KENNETH CLARK · 1927

2ND · FLOOR · DRAWING · ROOM · THE · SMALLWOOD · HOUSE ·
· NEW · BERN · NORTH · CAROLINA ·

Drawings are reproduced exactly at the scale marked



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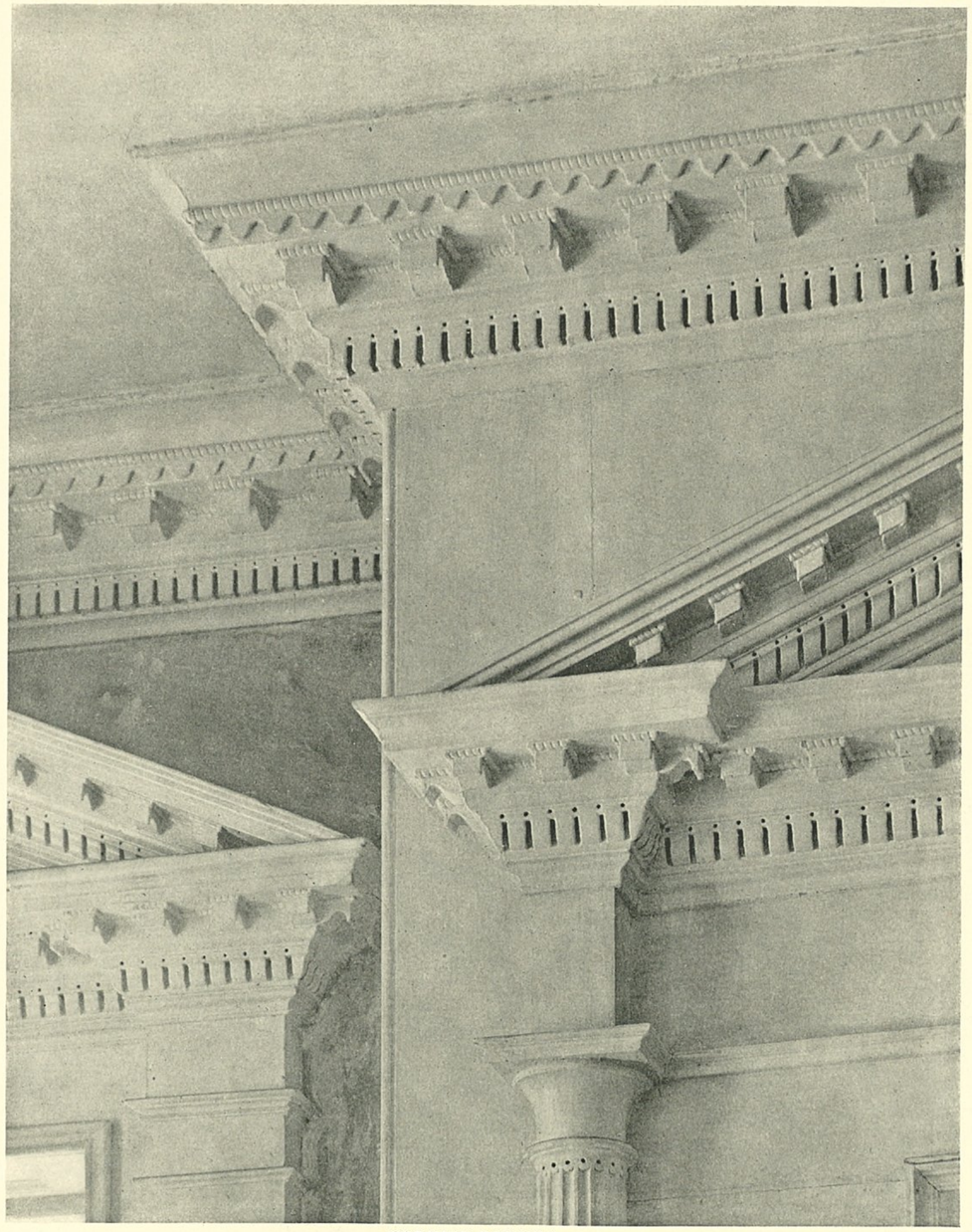
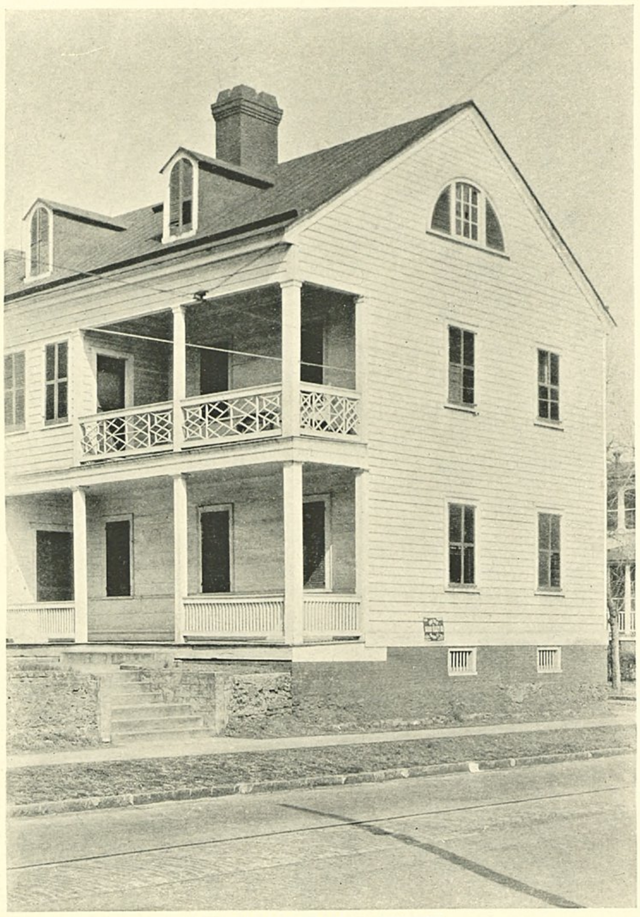


CORNICE DETAILS

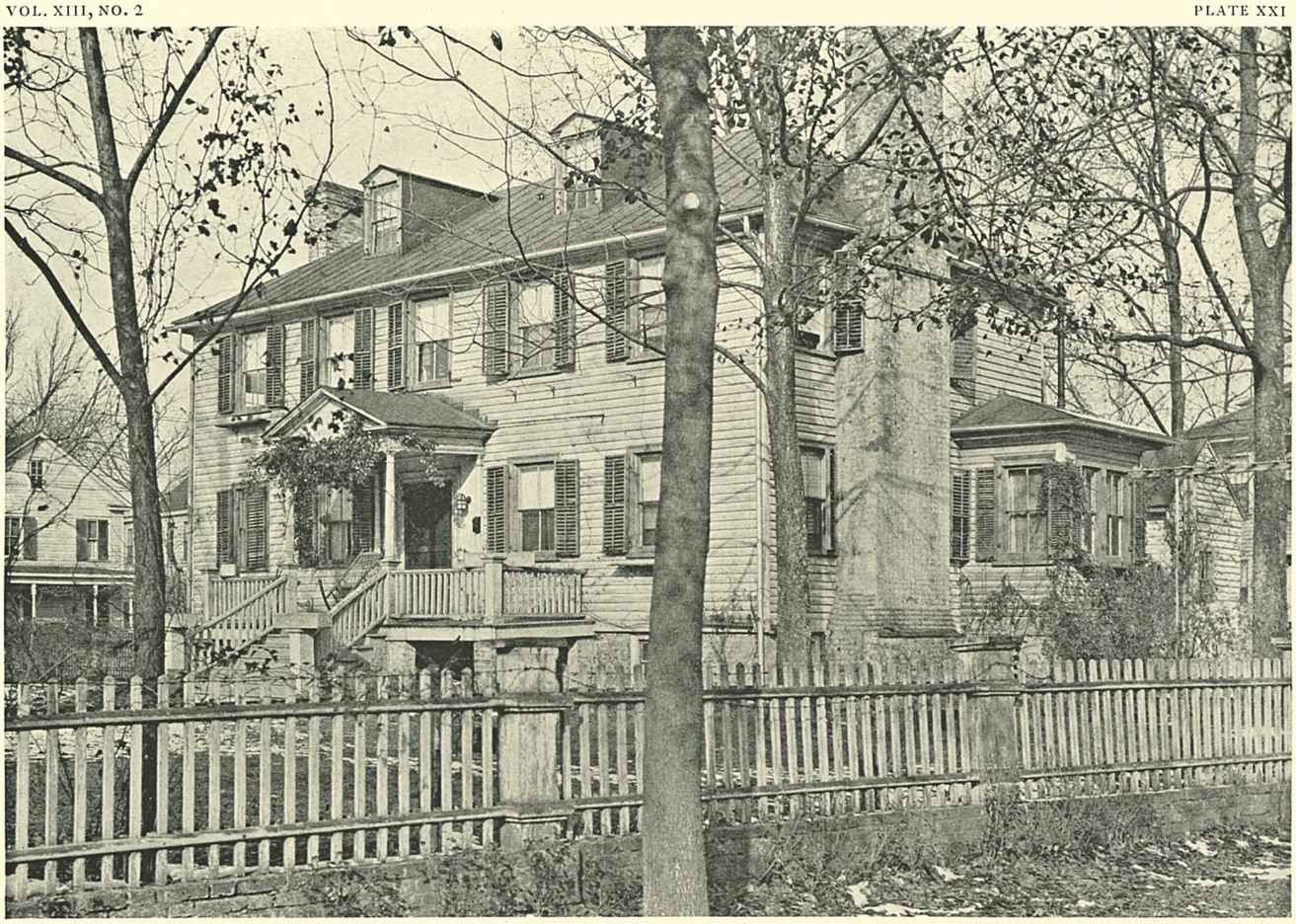
THE SMALLWOOD HOUSE, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

THE STEVENSON HOUSE, POLLOCK STREET



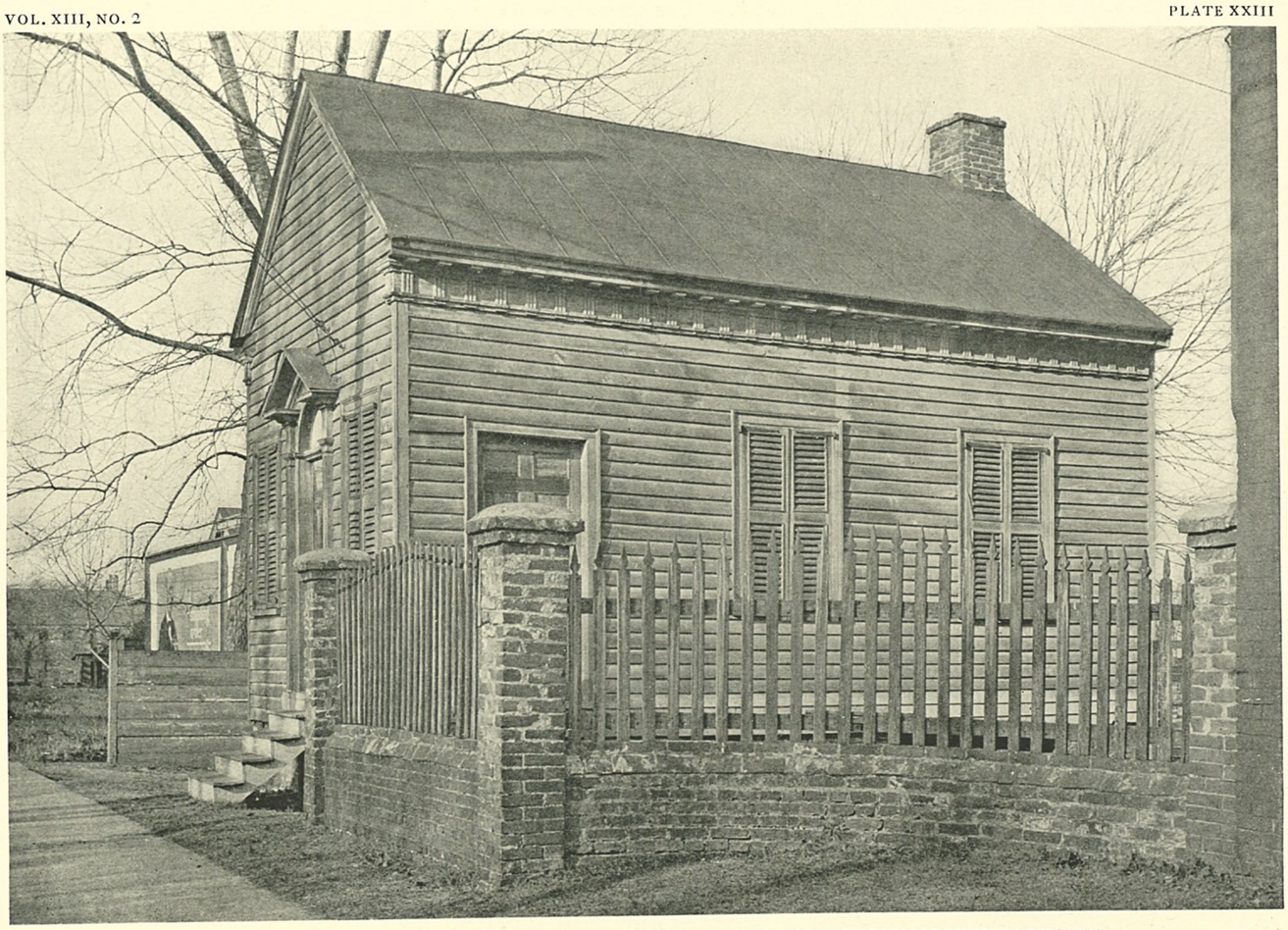
HOUSE ON CRAVEN STREET

TYPICAL HOUSES WITH "CAPTAIN'S WALK" AND ORNAMENTAL RAILING—NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



THE ROBERTS HOUSE, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

HOUSE ON THE C. D. BRADHAM PROPERTY, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



LAW OFFICE ADJOINING THE JUDGE DONALD HOUSE, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

LAW OFFICE ADJOINING THE WASHINGTON BRYAN HOUSE, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

WOOD CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

NOTES FOR THE SPECIFICATION WRITER

In Connection with Drawing on Page 23

Nationally accepted standard trade association lumber terms should be used in an architect's specification, rather than the obsolete or local grade names. This will eliminate much of the confusion now existing between the architect, builder and lumber dealer and will also save the client the possibility of having to pay a "safety premium," necessitated by specifications which are not clearly understood by those who contract to supply the lumber. In the suggestions that follow, offered for the assistance of the specification writer in connection with the wood construction details, shown on the following page, the data is stated in terms which have become standard in the producing districts from which the different species are obtained.

Special attention is called to INSULATION: one of the most important of recent developments in the building field

LUMBER: In view of the dangers of green or only partially seasoned lumber getting into a building and to establish the authority for the grade names used in the following specifications, it is suggested that a general clause be included in all specifications where lumber is specified as follows:

> **Specifications General:** "All lumber for any purpose mentioned in these specifications shall be at least air dry when delivered for use and shall be in accordance with the standard lumber association grading rules of the producing district from which the particular kind of lumber furnished shall come."

FRAMING OR STRUCTURAL LUMBER: The lumber required for framing or purely structural purposes need not, of course, be clear lumber so long as such technical defects as it contains do not impair its strength or serviceability for this use. In fact, it would be nothing short of gross extravagance to demand clear lumber for this use. Furthermore, there are several different woods from as many different lumber-producing regions of practically equal structural merit as far as all ordinary house building requirements are concerned. Which one of these woods to choose in any given locality is therefore a question as to which one can be purchased in that locality most economically, a matter determined largely by the distance from the source of production and the consequent freight haul to the market in question. For this reason the specification of Structural lumber should be more or less elastic as is suggested in the following notes:

JOISTS, HEADERS, ROUGH CARRIAGES, BLOCKING, ETC.

> **Specifications:** "All structural members, including studding, plates, rafters, joists, blocking, etc., shall be No. 1 Common grade Douglas Fir (or Pacific Coast Hemlock) or (Northern Pine) or (Fir and Larch) and shall be at least air dry when delivered on the job."

SUB FLOORS: The structural requirements of this item being less rigid than for the structural items listed above, lower grades should be permitted for reasons of economy. For the same reason the use of "random widths" and "mixed lengths" may also be permitted.

The common grades suggested in the following specification may be run to a Shiplap pattern or dressed and matched (D & M) as preferred.

The choice of species is even more inclusive than that suggested above for dimension lumber.

> **Specification:** "Sub-floors shall be No. 3 Common grade Northern Pine or (Pondosa Pine) or (Fir and Larch) or (White Fir) or (No. 1 Common Douglas Fir) or (Pacific Coast Hemlock), 6″ wide and dressed and matched (D & M) or (Random widths and Mixed lengths).

INSULATION: As suggested at the top of this page no single item in the construction of the modern house is more essential to comfort, both winter and summer, than a proper job of wall and roof insulation. Nor is there a more important factor in making a house easy and economical to heat. The brand of insulation recommended, namely, Balsam-Wool, is a Weyerhaeuser product, made from chemically treated, fire-resistant, sanitary wood fibre made waterproof and windproof between two sheets of tough, asphalt-lined kraft paper. It is a blanket form of insulation; flexible to permit a good, tight job and of greater practical insulating efficiency than any other similar product on the market today.

Suggested specifications for a complete job of insulation are on file in most architects' offices or may be secured from any of the branch offices of the Wood Conversion Company (Weyerhaeuser By-Products Division), at 1955 University Avenue, Saint Paul; 1849 Straus Building, Chicago; and 103 Park Avenue, New York.

> **Specifications-General:** "Heat insulation shall be standard ½″-thick Balsam-Wool, except for roof or top-floor ceiling insulation which shall be 1″ thick Balsam-Wool, manufactured by the Wood Conversion Company (Weyerhaeuser By-Products Division), Cloquet, Minnesota. Continuity of insulation shall be maintained. Where floors, ceilings or roofs are insulated, as well as outside walls, insulate thoroughly between joists and rafter ends. Throughout, all joints shall be made airtight, especially at door and window openings. Use full-length strips of insulation. End joints, where necessary, shall be butted and covered with lath, nailed through insulation to boarding or header. Insulation strips shall in all cases run in the same direction as studding, joists and rafters."

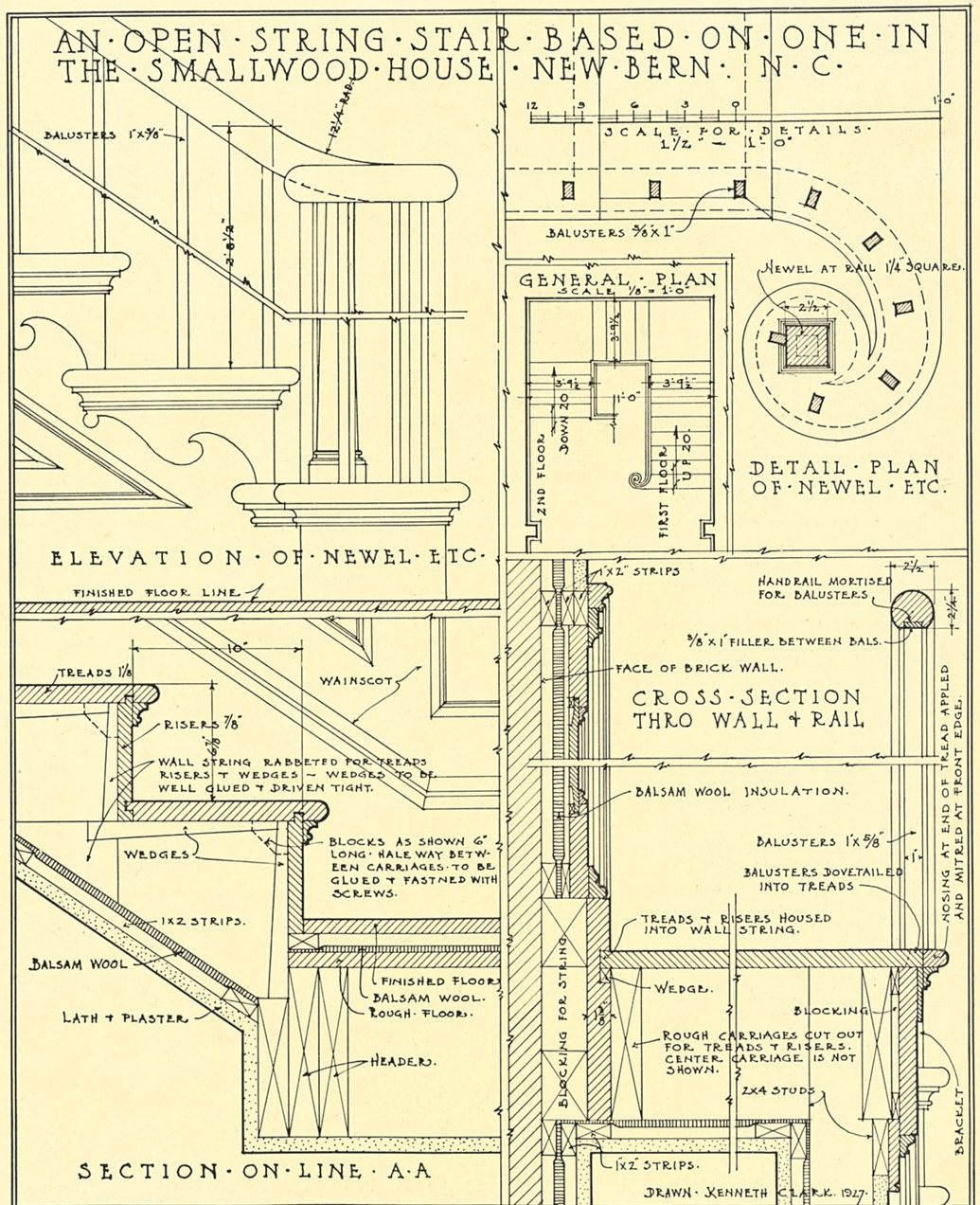
FOR OUTSIDE BRICK WALL INSULATION. Fur the wall with 1″ x 2″ furring strips, 16″ O. C., shimmed plumb and true. Insulate with 33″ width Balsam-Wool applied vertically on inside face of furring, edges butted together on every other strip. Fur over insulation with 1″ x 2″ furring strips on each wall; furring strip to receive lath and plaster.

FOR FLOOR INSULATION: Insulate with 33-inch width Balsam-Wool, applied over sub-floor with edges butted together over every other joist. Fur over insulation with 1-inch x 2-inch furring strips over each joist to receive finish floor.

[*Continued on page 24*]

·WOOD · CONSTRUCTION · DETAILS·
SUGGESTED · BY ·
WEYERHAEUSER · FOREST · PRODUCTS
·SAINT · PAUL · MINNESOTA·

AN · OPEN · STRING · STAIR · BASED · ON · ONE · IN THE · SMALLWOOD · HOUSE · NEW · BERN · N · C ·



·WOOD · CONSTRUCTION · DETAILS·
SUGGESTED · BY ·
WEYERHAEUSER · FOREST · PRODUCTS
·SAINT · PAUL · MINNESOTA·

Wood Construction Details
(Continued)

INTERIOR TRIM, including wainscot, mouldings, scroll work: Genuine White Pine or Pondosa Pine are suggested for all *inside* trim of the character detailed on the preceding page. Genuine White Pine lends itself to intricate carved ornament a little more readily, perhaps, than the general run of Pondosa Pine. Both of these woods are practical and will give service and, with the proper selection of stock at the millwork factory, either one will meet the requirements imposed by the details under consideration. The availability of these species of wood, the ease and care with which they can be worked, the ability to "stay put" after once in place, and the perfection with which they take and hold paint are qualities which recommend their specification.

General: All lumber used for interior trim (carved and moulded work, casings, panels, wainscot, etc.) shall be Genuine White Pine (or Pondosa Pine) having clear faces wherever exposed and shall be of detail as shown on the drawings.

NOTE: Clear cuttings in both Genuine White Pine and Pondosa Pine are available in the so-called "Factory" or "Shop" grades carried in stock by millwork manufacturers.

NEWELL, BALUSTER AND HAND RAIL: The use of hardwoods is recommended for these items and the selection of species will depend, of course, upon the type of wood finishing desired. The following specification is, therefore, subject to individual determination as to species in each case.

Specifications: Newell, Balusters, Hand Rail shall be turned to detail as shown from well selected kiln dried Birch or (other selected species of hardwood), and when turned shall be clear on all exposed surfaces.

STAIR TREADS AND RISERS: What has been said about Newell, Baluster and Hand Rail applies also to Stair Treads and Risers. Both items should be of hardwood in order that they may possess the necessary wear resistance. Just what species should be used is again a matter for individual selection in each case. The following specification is, therefore, subject to the architect's final selection as to species of hardwood desired.

Specifications: Stair Treads shall be made as per detail from clear, well selected kiln dried White Oak or (other selected species): Stair Risers shall also be made as per detail from clear, well selected kiln dried Birch or (other selected species).

Table Showing Nominal and Actual (Finished or Surfaced) Sizes of "Select" and "Shop" or "Factory" Grades

Genuine White Pine *and* Pondosa Pine

NOMINAL THICKNESS	"SELECT" Actual [Dressed] Thickness	"SHOP" OR "FACTORY" Actual [Dressed] Thickness
1 inch —will surface two sides to	$25/32$ inch	$25/32$ inch
1¼ inch— " " " " "	1⅛ inch	$15/32$ inch
1½ inch— " " " " "	1⅜ inch	$1\,13/32$ inch
2 inch — " " " " "	1¾ inch	$1\,29/32$ inch
2¼ inch— " " " " "	2⅛ inch	2⅛ inch
2½ inch— " " " " "	2⅜ inch	2⅜ inch
3 inch — " " " " "	2¾ inch	2¾ inch

Table Showing Nominal and Actual (Finished or Surfaced) Sizes of Dimension and Framing Lumber

Douglas Fir; Pacific Coast Hemlock; Idaho Fir and Larch; Northern Pine

NOMINAL THICKNESS	STANDARD FINISHED THICKNESS, S1S or S2S	NOMINAL WIDTH	STANDARD FINISHED WIDTHS S1E or S2E
2 inch	1⅝ inch	2, 4 & 6 inch	⅜ inch scant of nominal width
		8 inch & wider	½ inch " " " "
2½ inch	2⅛ inch	2, 4 & 6 inch	⅜ inch " " " "
		8 inch & wider	½ inch " " " "
3 inch	2⅝ inch	2, 4 & 6 inch	⅜ inch " " " "
		8 inch & wider	½ inch " " " "
4 inch	3⅝ inch	2, 4 & 6 inch	⅜ inch " " " "
		8 inch & wider	½ inch " " " "

Extra Standard 2 inch S1S or S2S to 1¾ inch, widths same as Standard.

Weyerhaeuser Forest Products
Merchants National Bank Building, SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA