

Which Louisiana Style of Architecture Does My House Fall Into?



FEMA

As you consider ways to make your house stronger, you might need to make decisions that will threaten the stylistic characteristics of your building. In order to make these changes and minimize the loss of historic integrity and significance, a general understanding of Louisiana architectural styles is helpful. Local styles are generally categorized into five major stylistic periods. While briefly explained below, these are described more thoroughly in the *Louisiana Speaks Pattern Book* (<http://www.louisianaspeaks.org>).

- Acadian-Creole
- Victorian
- Classical
- Arts & Crafts
- Modern



Acadian-Creole is a mixture of styles, which includes a distinctive French flavor that derived from the aesthetic creations of the original settlers who migrated to the Gulf Coast region from Nova Scotia. This style also involves a mix of English and Spanish colonial architecture and occasionally will have a Caribbean influence. These buildings often feature deep porches, or galleries, steeply pitched French hipped roofs, and details largely of a Classical taste with Victorian influences.



Victorian architecture is a style that, in part derives from the Carpenter Gothic cottages. Pattern books, such as those published by Andrew Jackson Downing, were the source of this regional trend. While traditionally Victorian architecture is an amalgamation of high styled and eclectic forms, including Eastlake, Queen Anne, Italianate, etc., the Gulf Coast Victorian style is based on simple, elegant forms adapted to small houses.



Classical architecture is a style that involves both Federal and Greek houses from the mid-nineteenth century. These homes are simple in form, starting with a solid structure—usually one or two stories—with a central porch or pavilion in the middle. Classical details were lightly added to such houses, but are simple when compared to examples from other regions.



Arts & Crafts emerged during the early-twentieth century in the Gulf Coast region as a derivative of the craftsman style. The region is home to many small craftsman cottages that have been influenced by vernacular styles. Arts & Crafts is characterized in the Gulf Coast region by broad, open porches; roofs with deep overhangs and exposed rafter tails; asymmetric compositions; grounded windows with a variety of upper muntin patterns; expressive trim; and porches with brackets. The most ardent feature is the use of the more vertical column rather than the shorter, wider column that was characteristic of the movement.



Modern style in Louisiana consists of a variety of new forms including architecture based on international models and on Louisiana regional identity (such as Hays Town, John Desmond, and Lloyd Vogt). The essential architectural elements of Louisiana Modern buildings are open floor plans, continuous flow of space between indoors and outdoors, innovation in building technology and architectural form, and simple forms without figural ornamentation.

Additional resources that can help you learn more about Louisiana architecture are available through the Preservation Resource Center (www.prcno.org).