

238 S. 12th Street (1889)



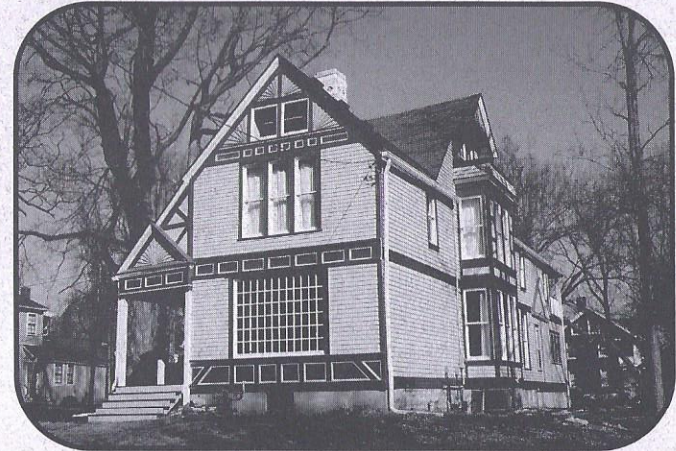
Ezra and Florence W. Best house
Modified Romanesque Revival & Queen Anne
Architect: John Batschy

The residence of Ezra and Florence W. Best, located at 238 S. 12th, is of a modified Romanesque design, an early work of the Quincy architect, John Batschy, Swiss born and European trained, who immigrated to Quincy in 1886. The Quincy Daily Journal of Oct. 7, 1889, noted that "Mr. Ezra Best is building a fine residence at the corner of Twelfth and York streets. It is a red stone front. We are informed that the stone was shipped from Minnesota." Mr. Best was the founder and president of E. Best Plumbing and steam Heating Company.

The massing and details of the design are elements of both the Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne styles. The octagonal tower to the left of the front entry porch on the front façade, the steeply pitched and irregularly shaped roof, and a mix of shingle styles on the upper portions of the projecting tower and gable ends above the second story are Queen Anne design elements. The wave patterning of the shingles on the gable over the front entry porch and low relief carved wooden triangular pediment over the front steps, are elements that appear in a number of Batschy-designed residences throughout Quincy. Batschy's own house, less than a block to the south at 316 S. 12th, but not on tour this year, shows a number of similar exterior details.

The interior displays numerous examples of 19th century stained and leaded glass windows, including a keyhole pattern and an arched triple window unit located on the front façade above the first floor entry porch. Oak woodwork throughout the house is accented with cherry, and massive pocket door of solid cherry grace the front and back parlors. In the nook formed by the back stairwell, an original marble corner sink stands near the door into the dining room.

1641 Hampshire (1885)



Jesse and Mary Weems house
Queen Anne
Architect: Harvey Chatten

Jesse Weems, born near Mt. Vernon, Virginia, who came to Quincy with the building of the Northern Cross Railroads' Quincy and Palmyra road, served as a conductor on the Wabash line for almost thirty years. His home, at 1641 Hampshire, was designed for Jesse and his wife Mary by Harvey Chatten early in his architectural career. However, at that point he had left behind the Franco-Italianate influences of his mentor, Robert Bunce, and was developing his own more eclectic style.

The Weems' house exhibits the multiple, overlapping upper-story gables and hand-sawn sunburst designs which are enduring aspects of Queen Anne architecture. A traditional paint scheme of contrasting shades of blue, with a bright gold picking up the sunburst designs, bracketing and trim, was employed by the current owners to emphasize these features of the house exterior. The bracketing and trim between the first and second stories, repeated below the attics above, are elements of the Stick Style which predated full-blown Queen Anne.

On the interior, modifications to the home's original design include an expansion of the front parlor by the enclosure of the former front porch. In the bedroom above, three tall windows bring light inside. Carved wood moldings throughout the house and the grand, open stairway opening into the downstairs hallway add to the gracious and traditional feel of the house.

As the current owners continue the painstaking restoration of the Weems home, they have encountered and repaired, or preserved, many of the hidden complexities and treasures of an older home. Found treasure include original windows which had been covered over, baby bottles, newspapers, and shoes hidden or lost in the spaces behind walls, and even a letter written to the original owners in 1886, declining an invitation to a party in the home.