

APPLETON HOUSE

2000 JERSEY STREET

ERNEST M. WOOD, ARCHITECT, 1907

CLASSIC REVIVAL (GEORGIAN) STYLE

The house at 2000 Jersey Street was built for retired riverboat captain Charles H. Appleton in 1907. The year of the construction of the house is prominently carved in the stonework of the gable of the west end of the house. The designer of the house was Quincy architect, Ernest M. Wood. The Appleton House is in the Classic Revival Style and specifically recalls houses constructed during the Georgian Period immediately preceding the American Revolution.

The characteristics of the Georgian Style that are apparent in the Charles H. Appleton House include the symmetry of the front of the house enhanced by the balanced arrangement of windows, dormers and chimneys; the central front door emphasized and sheltered by a projecting pavilion; the use of classical detail in the development of the eave line of the house into an elaborate cornice with a projecting course of cube-like dentils and a geometric Greek fret design; the arched pediment of the entry pavilion; and the development of the center front second floor window in a way that is suggestive of a Palladian window with a center arch flanked by two smaller windows. However, many houses of the Georgian Period had fronts that were subdivided into five or seven parts instead of the three-part front found on the Appleton House. Stone was not a common building material in the American Colonies and Rhode Island was the only colony of the original thirteen to have good building stone. The east screened porch is not a characteristic of the Georgian style. These departures from strict adherence to the historic Georgian Style suggest that architect Wood was not strictly a revivalist architect. In fact, the simple linear and geometric quality of the screen door of the front entrance of the Appleton House confirms that his architectural philosophy was more in sympathy with the Prairie School movement that began in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The plan of the Appleton House recalls the plans of the Georgian Period houses from which it is derived. The front door gives access to a central hall which crosses the house from front to back to give adequate access to all parts of the lower part of the house and to insure cross ventilation as well as give access to the second floor of the house. The main parlor is on the east side of the house and opens through a large square arch directly to the hall. A large fireplace and mantle in classical design are directly opposite the hall entrance and the relationship of the two is emphasized by pilasters framing both the entrance and the mantle and by ceiling beams connecting them. In the original house of the Georgian Period, the pilasters and beams would have been a decorative treatment concealing the handhewn graced timber frame of the house. The waincoted stairway with its elaborate handrail returns at a landing with an arched window to ascend to an arcaded second floor hall, not open on this tour. The dining room, with corner cabinets that have broken pediment tops with decorative urns, and a reception/music room balance the east parlor on the west side of the hall. The kitchen and pantries and a rear service stair are in an 'el' at the back of the house. The second floor of the house repeats the plan of the first floor, with rooms for servants on the second floor of the 'el.' There is a full attic and a full basement.

The structure of the Appleton House is interesting in that the exterior walls of the main part of the house are of solid stone construction and the interior of the house is supported on a steel frame. Steel beams and channels carry the weight of the floors and interior partitions and allow the large size