



Charles and Katherine Botsford Gay House
1648 Maine—1921
Ernest Wood, architect

This house finds Ernest Wood in a historicizing mood, almost oblivious of the Prairie School spirit that infected so much of his work just before World War I. If one had to find a period for the house, it would probably be somewhere between Tudor and Georgian—but English Georgian, not American. The robust porch balustrade, stocky brackets, segmental entry arch, and leaded glass windows are all marks of the English cottage swollen to grand proportions.

Complete frontal symmetry, however, was not part of the Olde English package and probably indicates a concession to the American colonial revival then in vogue. For the side elevations, Wood had a little more fun. The jumble of shapes and volumes and haphazard arrangements of windows recall his earliest Queen Anne work. Perhaps he had come full circle, exhausted by the rigors of Prairie School rectilinearity.

The house was commissioned by Katherine's mother, Caroline Botsford, shortly after she had been widowed. Its cornerstone was laid by her grandchildren, William and Caroline Gay.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
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