



Folk Victorian Style Guide

FOLK VICTORIAN



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Table of Contents

Folk Victorian (1870-1910)	1
Additional Examples of the Style	2
Building Form and Massing	3
Roof Shape and Materials	3
Cladding	4
Foundation	4
Chimneys	4
Porches and Entryways	5
Railings and Balustrades	5
Windows	6
Awnings	7
Doors	7
Lighting	7
Porte-Cochères	8
Decorative Features	8
Lighting	9
Fencing	10
Paint Colors	11



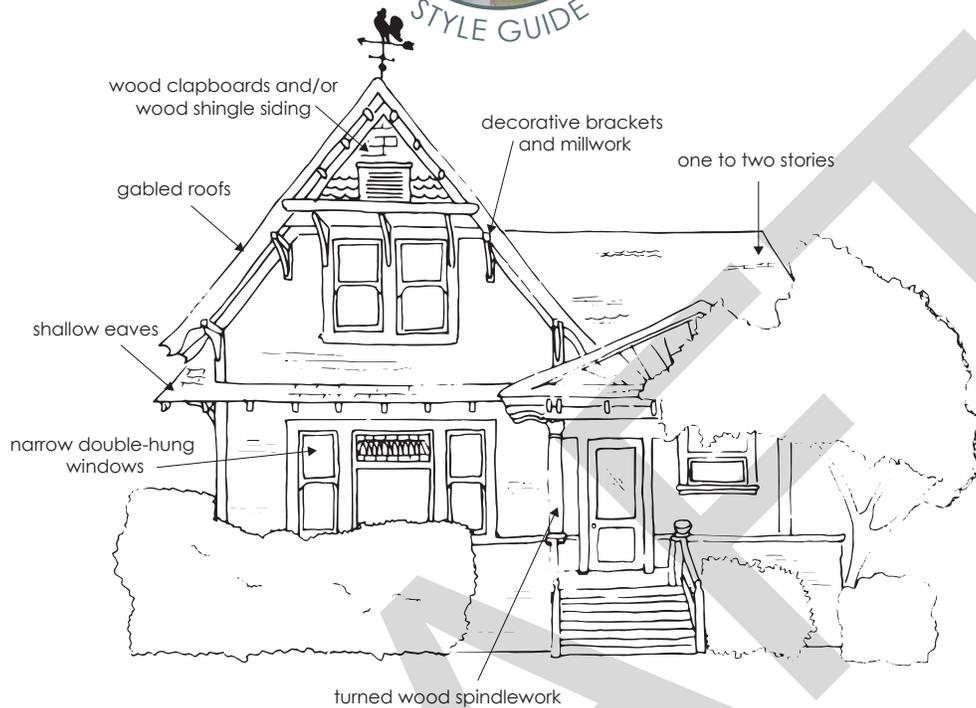
This section of the Long Beach Historic District Design Guidelines is part of a larger document created as a planning tool for the City's **historic districts**. The guidelines are intended to provide recommendations, inspiration, and advice as part of an instructive framework that will help guide sensitive changes to historic properties and encourage rehabilitation. By their nature, design guidelines are flexible. As such, outcomes may depend on the resource, the surrounding district, and the goals of the proposed project.

Any changes to the exterior of the property must be given prior approval by Historic Preservation staff through a **Certificate of Appropriateness**, and all projects may be subject to other City requirements not listed within these guidelines.

The first instance of certain terms throughout the Guidelines are highlighted in **bold** text. These terms are defined in a glossary in *Chapter 5: Additional Resources*.

For additional information, please refer to the other chapters of this document:

- Chapter 1: Purpose, Procedures & Overview
- Chapter 2: Guidelines for Maintenance and Repair
- Chapter 3: Design Guidelines by Historic District
- Chapter 4: Architectural Style Guides
- Chapter 5: Additional Resources



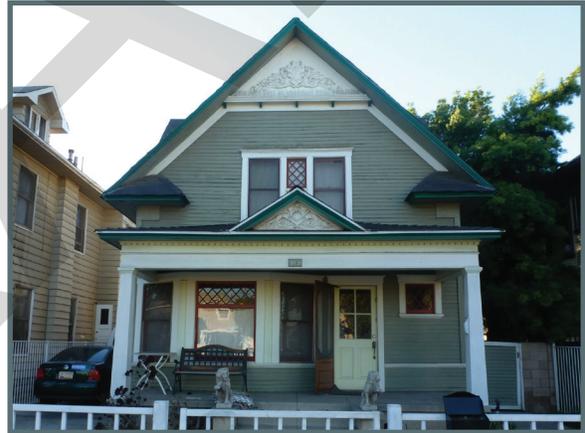
FOLK VICTORIAN (1870-1910)

Prior to the implementation of a transcontinental railroad system in the United States, building materials had to be locally sourced. Geography, therefore, often played a larger role than personal preferences for fashionable architecture. Folk houses, as these simpler homes are known, were only intended to provide the best shelter that local materials could build. While folk houses varied in form and building technique from region to region, each respective variant changed very little over time. The advent of rail transportation and shipping brought with it new architectural possibilities. Local materials, such as heavy timbers and logs that had previously dominated folk house styles, were replaced with lighter, more inexpensive sawn lumber shipped by rail from faraway mills, introducing a multitude of new choices for folk house architecture.¹

Many home owners updated their folk houses with these readily available materials, often inspired by the popular styles of the Victorian era.² New porches were added on to existing folk houses, with turned **spandrels** and decorative **millwork** trim that mimicked fashionable architectural styles such as Italianate and Queen Anne. For new construction, builders would simply add newly available pre-cut detailing to traditional folk house forms they had been building for years.³ This combination of the folk house form with the newly available Victorian-era ornamentation resulted in the Folk Victorian style.⁴ Folk Victorian is distinct from other Victorian-era styles in that consists of simple houses with applied ornamentation. Other Victorian-era architectural styles have much more complex roof forms, for example.⁵

The Folk Victorian style flourished between the years of 1870 and 1910 before ultimately being overshadowed by the increasingly popular Craftsman style.⁶ In Long Beach, many examples of Folk Victorian architecture can be found in and near early neighborhoods such as Drake Park and Carroll Park.

Additional Examples of the Style

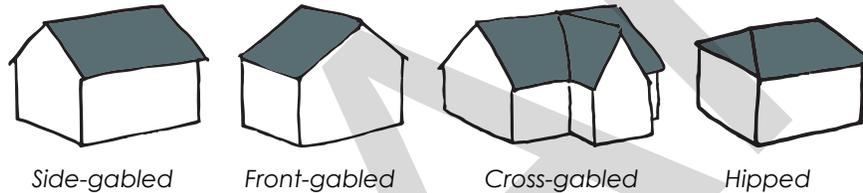


Building Form and Massing

Folk Victorian homes have simple **massing**, and are generally rectangular or L-shaped in plan. They may be one or two stories in height.

Roof Shape and Materials

Folk Victorian homes have simple roof forms, including front, side, or **cross-gabled**, and hipped. The **eaves** are generally shallow, and may be boxed or open, and embellished with millwork, brackets, and **cornices**. Roofs are clad in shingled material (composition, wood, etc.) or metal. Metal roofs are not typical for Long Beach, and are more common in the southern and eastern United States.



Wood shingles (left) or a visually similar substitute (right) would be acceptable for a Folk Victorian residence.

Composition shingles in an appropriate lighter neutral color, like the above examples, would be acceptable for an Folk Victorian residence.



Open eaves



Boxed eaves



Cornice



Decorative millwork



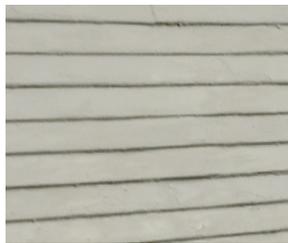
Decorative millwork



Boxed eaves with brackets

Cladding

Folk Victorian residences are most often clad in horizontal wood siding, and may be embellished with shingles. The shingles are more often carved or sawn into various shapes, including diamond, fishscale, octagonal, and round. Multiple shingle shapes may be used for decorative effect.



Horizontal wood clapboards



Carved/sawn shingles



square



fishscale



round



octagonal



half cove



diamond



hexagon



arrow/acorn



diagonal

*Carved/sawn shingle shapes**

Foundation

The foundation of a Folk Victorian house is not a prominent feature. They are generally concrete or masonry.

Chimneys

Chimneys are typically not a prominent feature of a Folk Victorian house, though many examples of the style will have a chimney. Where they exist, they are often interior masonry chimneys.

Porches and Entryways

The porch is typically one of the most elaborate parts of a Folk Victorian home, and is generally the focal point. Porches may project from or be recessed within the primary volume of the residence, but almost all are elaborated with decorative **spindlework** and/or millwork trim. This early style may have wood porch steps and floors that should be repaired and retained, and replaced in kind should they be damaged beyond repair.



Porch supports are often turned wood posts. Porches may be enclosed with a wood balustrade or railing, while others may be surrounded by a half wall, often clad in wood clapboards.



Turned wood porch supports



Half walls with wood clapboard siding



A simpler example, with basic wood posts and porch supports.

Railings and Balustrades

Balusters, railings, and porch supports are made of wood. While some Folk Victorians will have simple wood posts, the majority are more intricate with turned wood balusters and porch supports. These elements should be retained and repaired, and replaced in kind. If replacement in kind is not feasible, the replacement should be similar to one of the options below.



Turned wood balustrades

Windows

Folk Victorian windows are rectangular in shape, and are typically quite narrow. Most windows will be one-over-one **double-hung** wood sash, but multi-light **glazing**, geometric **muntins**, or **art glass** are common embellishments. They are often arranged in pairs (see below), but may also be found in tripartite projecting bays.

If a window on a Folk Victorian house requires replacement, it should be replaced in kind, or with an option similar to the examples below. Windows should be replaced within their original openings.



Single-light double-hung
(one-over-one)



Single-light double-hung in a tripartite bay



Single-light fixed window
with geometric muntins



Single-light fixed window
with art glass



Single-light fixed window
with geometric muntins



Art glass



Awnings

Awnings are not characteristic of the Folk Victorian style. In place of awnings, consider installing interior shutters or window treatments.

Doors

Folk Victorian doors are narrow and rectangular. They are partially **glazed** and often paneled wood doors, and may have partial glazing.

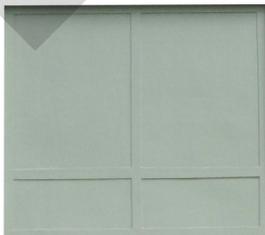


Garage Doors

Vehicle use was not commonplace at the height of the Folk Victorian style's popularity. However, garages have often been added to properties to accommodate modern needs. Simple **carriage style** doors are encouraged. Contemporary garage doors are available through various retailers that both mimic the attractive appearance of a carriage style door and operate using convenient electric openers. The use of real wood garage doors is encouraged, but not required.



Wood carriage style garage doors



Tilt-up door



Compatible contemporary garage doors



Porte-Cochères

Folk Victorian houses are, by their nature, simple in design. Porte-cochères are typically seen on larger, more elaborate homes and are therefore not a characteristic feature for the style.

Decorative Features

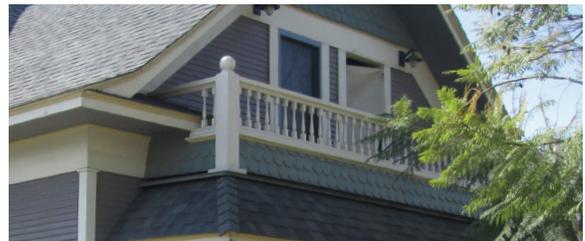
Decorative features on a Folk Victorian home are often concentrated around the porch, roofline, and apex of the gable, and may include spindlework, millwork, brackets, and cornices. Other decorative features may include art glass and **weather vanes**.⁷



Brackets and cornices



Millwork



Spindlework



Weather vanes

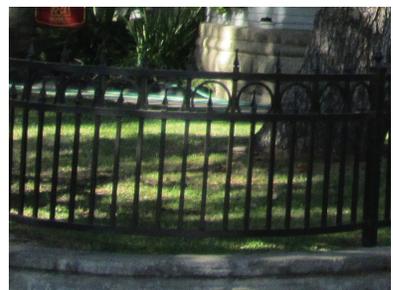
Lighting

Traditional lantern shapes in white or dark metal would be appropriate for a sconce or hanging porch light on a Folk Victorian home.



Fencing

Compatible fencing for a Folk Victorian property may consist of a low, wood or wrought iron fence with traditional, vertically oriented posts. The fence should have voids or spaces like the examples shown here. Wood fences may be painted or stained in a light neutral color, while wrought iron should be very dark or black.



Paint Colors

Folk Victorian homes may be colorful—though not excessively bright—painted in a wide range of hues such as blues, greens, purples, pinks, and yellows. Schemes often include several tones of the same color, and may feature additional complimentary colors for contrast. Trim such as porch supports, millwork, and window and door surrounds often remain white for emphasis.

There are hundreds of possible color combinations, and property owners are therefore encouraged to seek out additional resources such as *Century of Color: Exterior Decoration for American Buildings 1820-1920*, by Roger W. Moss, for historically accurate inspiration.

