

Is it a Victorian or is it an American Foursquare?

CONTRIBUTED BY BETSY CECCIO,
KELLER WILLIAMS NJ METRO GROUP

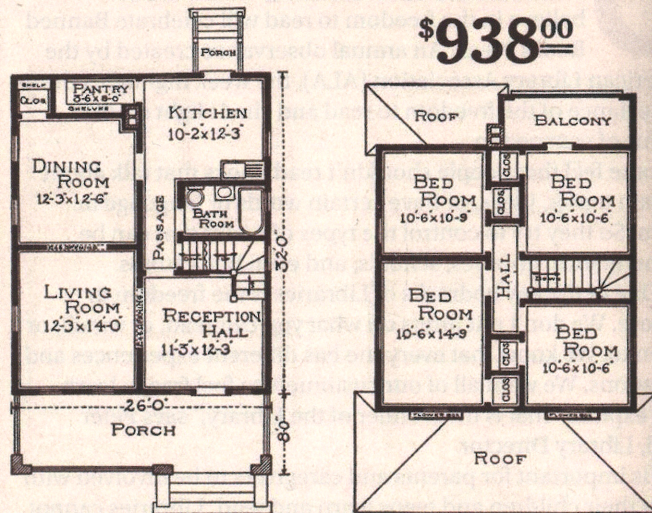
ONE OF THE MOST OFTEN mislabeled residential architectural styles is the common American Foursquare. This is one of the more popular and adaptable styles seen throughout Montclair, yet many homeowners don't realize that they live in one.

The American Foursquare is just that, 4 square rooms in plan, more or less. They are 2.5 story dwellings, characterized by a boxy, square exterior, usually capped with a 'hipped' roof sloping down toward each of the four façades (think pyramid). Large, projecting dormer windows break up the primary façade roofline, if not all four sides, allowing light into the third floor attic space. The larger examples typically have a central entrance hall and staircase with the four rooms radiating out from the



MODERN HOME No. 264B179

\$938⁰⁰



—FIRST FLOOR PLAN—

—SECOND FLOOR PLAN—

\$1.00 buys the complete plans, specifications and bill of material for this house. \$938.00 pays for all of the material, with the exception of cement, brick and plaster, for this house, when purchased from us.

Montclair Native & Local Expert Your Partner in Real Estate



Betsy Carey Ceccio, Realtor
Keller Williams NJ Metro Group
c 917 755-7672

Call or Email for a -

**Free Brochure on Local
Options for Downsizers**

Will Get Your Home Sold - A to Z

Strategies and Planning to Get Your Home
Ready for the Market, Clean Out, Staging,
Photography, Marketing, Negotiations...
...to **Closing!**



Circle of Excellence - Silver Level

"Betsy is smarter, more capable, more accessible... and generally better than any other agent I have ever worked with." - A. Goldberg

betsyceccio@kw.com • www.UrbanSuburbanNJ.com

middle corridor. The more common, modest versions typically enter into one of the front quadrant rooms which serves as a reception hall and features an open side staircase.

It became a popular style toward the turn of the century and they were built up to and even shortly after WWI, but the majority of Montclair Foursquare homes were built from 1900-1915. The one feature that most often makes a Foursquare appear Victorian-like is the large, covered front porch. Without air conditioning back in the day, these covered (often-wraparound) porches shaded the first floor from direct sunlight and served as social spaces where neighbors could congregate, catching a breeze and sipping lemonade in rocking chairs.

American Foursquare homes were a more affordable and accessible style in the post Victorian period. Middle-class families now had the ability to mail-order "custom" pre-cut kit homes for their urban and suburban lots. They were especially popular in railroad communities because the pre-cut parts were shipped in boxcars and arrived with directions for assembly. The early commuting town of Montclair was a perfect place for this modern convenience! Homeowners could order a variety of decorative styles from catalogs with a choice of ornamental details and features. The common styles to choose from included Craftsman, Classical, Colonial, Prairie, as well as Mission and Italian Renaissance. Sometimes in town here, you'll see local examples with a combination of these styles - some truly great hybrids can be seen if you keep an eye out!

Betsy grew up in Montclair in a 1900 Classical Revival Foursquare and now lives in town with her family of 4 in a 1905 Craftsman Foursquare.