

Style guide helps identify architectural types for historic buildings

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A booklet published by the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center offers guidance to installation cultural resource managers who often need to identify architectural influences on historic structures. The *Architecture of the Department of Defense: A Military Style Guide*, is fully illustrated with color photos of various architectural styles used from 1700 to present. It is available at:

[http://acwc.sdp.sirsi.net/client/search/asset:asset?t:ac=\\$N/1005784](http://acwc.sdp.sirsi.net/client/search/asset:asset?t:ac=$N/1005784)

The document showcases the wealth of historic architecture inside military installations' fence lines. It also serves a regulatory requirement – DoD is responsible for the stewardship of historic properties under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. However, many cultural resource managers do not have architectural or architectural history backgrounds. The style guide aims to help these managers identify character-defining features and communicate effectively with all stakeholders. The guide was developed under the DoD Legacy Resource Management Program.

What are architectural influences?

The architectural influence of a building is evident in its shape, materials, details, and other features that distinguish one building type from another. Many architectural influences exist throughout the United States. These evolved as national trends and regional tastes changed. These influences can indicate the time or period of a building's construction as well as the trends of the country and region at that time.

Buildings on military installations have architectural influences reflecting the historical evolution of the site, the military service, and DoD. The evolution of styles within DoD does not match the civilian dates for the style exactly. Often the military examples are later than their civilian counterparts. For example, the Main Post Chapel at Fort Lewis, Wash., was built in the Romanesque Revival style in 1934, some 30 years after the style reached popularity.

Military architectural influences and building types

Most buildings on military installations represent a particular building type and/or architectural influence due to DoD's use of standardized plans. Each branch of the military developed standard plans to accommodate its building needs cost-effectively through duplication. The plans created a template for installation layouts, public works systems, building types, and landscaping.

The standard plans incorporated contemporary architectural influences and their associated features in elements such as the overall form of the building, interior and exterior decorative details, and floor plans. For instance, in the 1860s, the Army developed its first set of standardized designs for housing based on the fashionable architectural influences of that time – Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne. However, the plans were often simplified or adapted to reduce construction costs and increase efficiency. For this reason, buildings may have only a few features rather than fully representing an influence with all its decorative and functional features.

Using the style guide

The document contains many drawings to show architectural details in addition to the photos of historic buildings across DoD. The National Park Service describes a method for identifying architectural influence and character-defining features in its Preservation Brief 17, *Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*. This publication is a very helpful reference when managers use the style guide.



The style guide covers multiple building styles, from chapels to housing to temporary barracks designs. An example is this 1930s officers' quarters at Fort Lewis, Wash., with Colonial Revival architectural influences.