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ISM

27 September 2017

### Victorian Architecture

Architecture surrounds us. It is nearly impossible to miss. What many of us do miss, however, is that some old forms of architecture still surround us today. There are indeed many columns used in modern architecture that pay tribute back to the Greeks and Romans, but columns are not the only thing that continue to appear in present-day buildings. All throughout neighbourhoods and suburbs, the influence of Victorian architecture has left its mark.

Large Victorian style homes were a sign of status in the era from 1837 to 1902. The bigger the house, the more rooms, the more large windows, the more gardens that one had, the more wealthy one was. These houses were designed to show off wealth to others on the outside through large porches (usually only in America), bay windows, and gables. In the east in North America, only the truly wealthy entrepreneurs were able to have such large and showy houses. As people moved farther west (especially in Canada), they were more able to have more extravagant houses built for them. The western Victorian houses were more of a mixture of styles and less strictly Victorian. They were still large, extravagant, and showy, but they had less of the refinery of the houses in Europe and those closer to the Atlantic coast.

A major aspect of Victorian houses were the many many rooms that all had different and specific purposes. There were billiard rooms, conservatories, and sometimes rooms for live-in

help. We do not see as many of these rooms in twenty-first century houses, but today we have media rooms instead. In addition to the conservatories and billiard rooms of Victorian houses, there were parlours, dining rooms, extravagant entrance halls, kitchens, bathrooms, multitudinous bedrooms, rooms for residents, and rooms specifically for entertaining guests. Some houses such as the one of William Roper Hull, could entertain seven hundred guests or more at one time. These houses were built to flaunt wealth in the faces of guests and passers-by alike.

In taking into consideration the Victorian era and the reason why the era was named so, this display of money makes complete and total sense. The era was named after Queen Victoria of England who took the throne in 1837 when her father tragically passed away. During the era, manners, morals, ethics, and dignity were some of the largest themes of the time. Wealthy people were proud of their hard work; they had dignity, and they wanted to show this all off in their ornate homes.

The Romantic period was at its peak when Queen Victoria took the throne, so it makes sense that large bay windows and conservatories were featured in Victorian mansions. The windows let in natural light and allowed those inside the house to see outside. The conservatories are similar to what we know today as greenhouses. They could be seen as bringing a little bit of nature into the house, or bringing a little bit of the house out to nature.

Victorian mansions bring together some of the most important themes of the era into architecture. They were made to show off wealth and dignity with the sheer size, numerous rooms, gables, porches and windows. And besides that, they were meant to reflect aspects of romanticism in bringing together a medium of indoor and outdoor spaces.

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