

ORIGINS OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE ARCHITECTURE OF CARLTON LANDING



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This is the only page in this book that explicitly talks about history because the focus of the book is new living traditions built on the places and buildings that can be most-loved by people alive today. In many cases, those places and buildings may look very much like those built by long-dead generations of our ancestors, but they will also vary in ways that could only be our own.v

American architecture has a peculiar challenge that other nations don't often experience: between the time the land was settled by Europeans until the Thermostat Age began, there simply wasn't enough time for a truly indigenous architecture to develop. Oklahoma is perhaps the best example of this phenomenon because until the Land Runs of 1889 through the late 1890's, settlers of European descent were banned from much of the state. The first electric thermostat was invented in 1883.

Why do thermostats matter? Because with a thermostat (and light switches, etc.) you can simply flip a switch and be comfortable. Before the thermostat age, the architecture had to do all the work of making you comfortable, but after it began, you could use any style of architecture you like and mechanically and electrically condition it. And so much of America was built out with a random collection of historical styles, changing on the whims of fashion.

Carlton Landing, however, aspires to greater things than that. The Most-Loved Places are usually those where you can say "I know where that is!" Because their architecture is so well-

attuned to regional conditions, climate, and culture, it has a particular character.

How do we create that character where it has not strongly existed heretofore? A good policy is to look back to times when people were not so wealthy as we are today; to when they had to make things work out, rather than just buying more and more stuff like we do now. For Oklahoma, that's the simple farmhouses, barns, and outbuildings on the homesteads of the early years. We believe that it is in these simple buildings that we can find the clues as to what Oklahoma's best architecture would have been, had it had time to emerge before the Thermostat Age. And then we hope to help finally bring it to life in a way that has not happened heretofore.

Here are some of the clues we've seen already: by the time the big Land Run occurred in 1889, the US was in the worst economic downturn it had experienced to date. Because money was scarce and resources were even more scarce, details tended to be quite simple. Why build three gables if a single gable would do the job? Why ship in expensive components if you could build

ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

Spice Styles should be used carefully. Nobody wants a dish that is all pepper and no potatoes. By the same token, a place built primarily of unique styles is likely to cause serious architectural indigestion.

them locally instead? The architecture of Carlton Landing aspires to achieve a similar calmness and simplicity. You might look at drawings of a single building and think “isn’t that a little too plain?” But assembled together side-by-side on a street, buildings like this are far more pleasing than today’s often hyperactive Architecture.

So the residential components of Territorial architecture was composed of simple shapes with houses built mostly of wood and natural sandstone because that’s what was available. Interestingly, the ability of brick material allowed early settlers in Oklahoma to create wandering brick mainstreets of more formal urban Territorial Architecture

as seen in Guthrie, OK and Eufala, OK. What else do we know? The architecture of Carlton Landing should condition itself as much as possible using the Sustainability Strategies on the previous pages.

But this isn’t just about conditioning; it’s also about community because in Oklahoma, families and neighborhoods are important. That’s why you’ll see broad porches lining the streets of Carlton Landing where you can sit behind your frontage garden, talking across the fence with a neighbor who’s stopped by on the way back home from picking up a few things at the market down the street.

SPICE STYLES

GENERAL PRINCIPLES & MINOR SPICE STYLES

The majority of this book describes an architecture that is appropriate to the culture, climate and conditions of Carlton Landing, but people sometimes consider their towns somewhat bland and unappetizing without an occasional break from the norms. So while the greatest places on earth have a high degree of architectural agreement, those great places in America typically have a bit of architectural spice to go with the main ingredient architecture.

Spice Styles should be selected by each community according to their local traditions. Major Spice Styles are those one or two Spice Styles that occur repeatedly within each community. Minor Spice Styles are those that occur only infrequently; up to nine of them may be selected.

Spice Styles lose their effect if over-used since they become ordinary in the presence of their own kind. No Major Spice Style should be used within 600 feet of another example of the same style, measured along the centerline of the thoroughfares along the closest route between the two buildings. Minor Spice Styles, measured the same way, should not be used within 1,200 feet. Two different Spice Styles shall not occur within the same side of the same block, except when both occur on opposite ends of the block.

In Carlton Landing the Major Spice Styles are Arts and Crafts and Rural

Gothic and the Minor Spice Styles are Italianate and Victorian as described in [A Field Guide to American Houses](#). If you choose to build a building in one of these Spice Styles, then search out three very good local precedent buildings and study them carefully. Look particularly at the characteristics highlighted in the rest of this book: massing, wall heights, configurations and materials, roof slopes and materials, eave materials and details, door and window materials, styles and surrounds, column and beam materials, details and configurations, balcony materials, details and configurations, and the materials and details of dormers and attachments such as chimneys, awnings and fences or walls.

You will not be copying entire buildings, of course. It is necessary to get into the mind of the architect of the precedent building. Determine the principles they were using, not just the particulars. If you are armed with principles, then you can solve today’s problems in the same way that the old architects would have if they were here today. It is only by doing this that you can bring the old languages to life again.

