Sketches and Photographs
documenting the architectural history of the Town of Manteo
January 2007
A Sketch Book of Manteo Houses

This ongoing sketchbook is in response to requests to document the patterns, the architectural vocabulary of the older, traditional houses in Manteo.

The town has made more than a twenty-five year commitment to citizen based planning to preserve the village atmosphere and to encourage the protection of the historical and architectural significance of our neighborhoods and our traditional island houses.
It is my hope that this sketch book can become a vehicle for increasing public awareness of our town’s revitalization and conservation efforts. Protect and Preserve! The Town of Manteo.

Manteo has a rather simple architectural heritage. Settled in the 1860’s, incorporated in 1899, Manteo is predominately a 20\textsuperscript{th} century town. But in the last quarter of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century a distinctly different quality of residential construction developed across the country, styles affected by mass production of houses and house plans that seem the same wherever the are built.

It is this resulting “sameness” that destroys sense of place.
This sketch book is being developed for the Architectural Review Committee in hopes that it will provide design guidelines that offer general direction for character retention and the preservation continuum of the historic town. It should provide assistance in both preservation and restoration projects as well as new construction opportunities.
Also, this sketch book is for home owners adding onto an existing house. They often have a difficult time finding materials and components that are in keeping with the period and detailing of their original house.
A pattern book can provide resources for homeowners and builders as they repair, rebuild and add onto their houses and preserve the visual integrity of their neighborhoods.

From replacing windows or a front door, adding a wing to a house, building a new house, to building a new development, this sketch book, together with the publication DESIGN GUIDELINES: THE MANTEO WAY OF BUILDING should help one find the appropriate patterns to guide the process of designing and building in ways consistent with traditional Manteo architecture.
The basis of all historic Manteo architectural design is UN-ADORNED SIMPLICITY and ADDITIVE FORM. Manteo Buildings have a main body, a simple form. Additional space is created through secondary additions to the main form. Wings are added. Windows are symmetrically spaced. And porches are ADDED, rather than being created within the main form.
Materials

Horizontal Siding

Wood Shingles (not shakes)
6” max. exposure

Board and Batten

Red Brick
note brick pier is under structure of house

Materials
Unadorned simplicity and additive form does not necessarily result in small houses.

Traditional Manteo Houses, built in the local vernacular are distinguished by a *Main Body*, a simple form.

Additional space is always created through secondary additions to the main form. Additions become *wings*. They can be one, one and a half, or two stories. But they are almost always set back from the front façade.

Additions can be added in many combinations, providing then are secondary in form and mass and match existing roof pitch.
Correctly proportioned, symmetrically spaced, properly detailed WINDOWS and DOORS are the most important single design decision after the basic form. Windows upstairs and downstairs almost always line up on Manteo Houses.

Porches are very important to Manteo houses. They find expression in almost every architectural style or vocabulary in island houses. They are usually additive secondary and have a lower roof pitch than the main body.
The final assembly of various components should produce a house of recognized character and quality no matter what the size.

Compliance with “The Manteo Way of Building” requires that the architectural vocabulary of an addition to an existing historic house have the same basic architectural elements of the main house.

Compliance with “The Manteo Way of Building” requires that the architectural vocabulary of a new building in the historic area have architectural elements found elsewhere in the historic structures in Town.

The new house or addition should be recognized as “belonging to Manteo.”
Gables and Eaves

Horizontal break at the top of the wall

Carpenter cut shingle patterns
Gables and Eaves

carpeted cut gable end decoration

splayed gable end

clipped gable roof
craftsman style details
“pop out bay”

material change at top of wall
shed dormer, clipped gable

gable returns
federal style details
with wide corner boards

shutters that fit

gable returns
shutters that fit
Windows

Windows in Manteo have vertical proportions. The muntin patterns are typically 6 over 6, 2 vertical lights over 2, 3 vertical lights over 1, 4 over 4, or 6 over 1. Window panes are more vertical in proportion than square. They are never horizontal in older traditional island houses.

Standard windows are double hung.

Windows are symmetrically spaced in a façade. They are most often the same size upstairs and downstairs. Upstairs windows nearly always line up with the window below. Sometimes upstairs windows are shorter than downstairs but are the same width. Various multi-sized windows are never found in the same house.

Exterior casings are a minimum of 3½” wide and always include a window sill. Windows are never “picture-framed.”
Special windows include dormers. Manteo has several examples of both “A” roofed dormers, single, and double windowed and shed roof dormers.

Special windows include paired and triple windows. But both paired and triple windows are actually single windows installed 4” to 8” apart, never “twin mulled windows.” There is always a space between them for exterior trim.

All windows have sills, some have aprons.
Dormers

- Shed dormer
- Hipped dormer
- Dormer located below roof line
- “A” dormer
single dormer
with exposed rafter ends

craftsman style dormer

double dormer
with boxed rafters

hipped dormer
Other special windows include pop-outs and Bay Windows.

Boxed bays or “pop-outs” and traditional angled bay windows are frequently found on turn of the century island houses.

Three, four, and five window bays are found in Manteo. All bays are custom framed using single double hung windows... never purchased as a unit.
Bay Windows

2 story bay with intersecting porch

2 story bay

Detail of bay
Note single windows equally spaced
Windows

6 over 6
symmetrically spaced

4 over 1 craftsman style

6 over 1
with 6” between two single windows

3 over 1
2 over 2 original 1890s

new vinyl 2 over 2 window with traditional wood casing (also vinyl siding) 2006

4 over 4
Doors
Front doors typically have 4 panels or 6 panels.

Arts and Crafts doors often have glass panes in the top \( \frac{1}{3} \) of the door over panels.

15 light "French Doors" have also been frequently used in traditional Manteo houses.

All front doors may have sidelights and/or transoms.

Some front doors have glass in the top half.

Contemporary leaded glass decorative front doors were never found on older Manteo houses.
Porches

Porch Roofs and Eaves.
Porches can have gabled ends, shed roofs or combinations of the two forms. Hipped porches are common. Porch roofs typically have a 4 in 12 pitch. Exposed rafter tails are either shaped or cut plumb.

Columns, Posts and Railings.
There are as may different style porch posts in Manteo as there are different style picket fences. The variety contributes significantly to the historic visual integrity of Manteo. There are few round columns.
Front porches and picket fences are among the most distinguishing architectural elements of Manteo. Traditionally porches rest on brick piers and are left open beneath. Porch rails have both a top and bottom rail and are never fastened at the bottom to the floor structure.

The Porch floor is usually 1x4 tongue and groove material laid PERPENDICULAR to the house with a 3/4" overhang; no beauty bands, no eased edged deck boards Manteo porches have great slope, usually 1 1/2" in a 6' or 8' wide porch. And the porch floor is at least 1 1/2" below the finished floor of the house.

Step pickets rest on treads and do not have a bottom rail on the older Manteo Houses.
Porches, Posts and Steps

splayed post

splayed post
chamfered post

craftsman style

half post
turned post
shaped rails

round column
shingled craftsman column

exposed decorative rafter ends
exposed porch
rafters

carpenter patterns

craftsman style
chamfered posts
carpenter patterns
repair in the style of the original (roof rail)
Manteo is known for its picket fences.

Fences provide definition between public and private spaces and are an integral component of the historic village residential area. Typically 30 to 40 inches high, the picket fences are found in many different styles throughout the Town. It would be difficult to find a traditional picket fence design that does not exist somewhere in Manteo.

Simple iron fences and horizontal rail fences are also found.
Fences
Additions
A smaller house can become a larger house without destroying its architectural integrity.

It requires the use of the same roof pitch, the same style windows and most often the same exterior material. Exterior details soffit, fascia, eave and window trim needs to match existing.

An example of the addition of a side wing and front porch.
Addition
built in the style of the original
Garages
in the various styles of Manteo houses.
Out Buildings
A New House
Or an Addition to an older house
should be recognize as

"belonging to the Island"
Architectural elements that “belong to the Island”
Visual Glossary of terms
traditional window head heights in proportion to ceiling heights.