

# Greek Revival Architecture Glossary of Terms:

**Adobe:** unfired mud blocks used for wall construction often covered with stucco; most commonly, used in areas that experience little rainfall.

**Architrave:** the lowest section of the entablature: architrave, frieze, and cornice. It is also used to reference ornamental molding around doors and windows.

**Base:** the lowest portion of a column.

**Capitals:** the upper decorative portion of a column or pilaster below the entablature. The capitals indicate the difference between orders.

**Clapboard:** used to cover the outer walls of buildings, made from long flat pieces of wood that overlap horizontally.

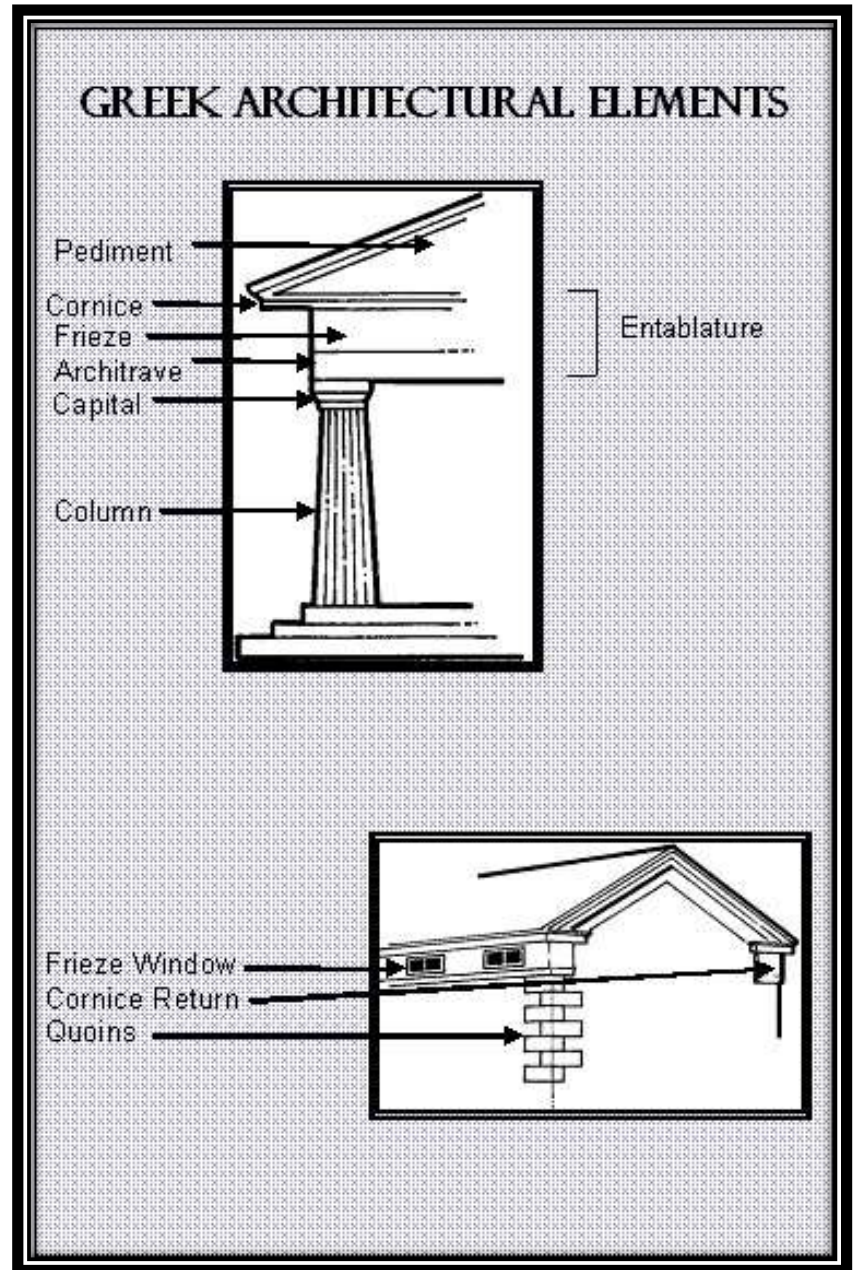
**Cobblestone:** naturally rounded stones used in construction which are larger than a pebble but smaller than a boulder.

**Corinthian Order:** one of the most decorated of the six recognized orders, characterized by slender fluted columns and ornate capitals.

**Cornice:** the uppermost part of the entablature in Greek architecture, it projects outward and is often decorated.

**Cornice Returns:** a pair of cornices that wraps around the corner of a gable end without meeting; giving the impression of a pediment.

**Dentils:** small square blocks in a series that are often found on cornices, moldings, and pediments.



**Doric Order:** one of the least decorated of the recognized orders, characterized by a plain capital, and heavy fluted columns that lack a base.

**Entablature:** the entire horizontal structural member supported by columns; composed of the (lowest to highest) architrave, frieze, and cornice.

**Frieze:** the middle portion of the entablature below the cornice. Also, a plain or decorative band located immediately below the cornice.

**Frieze Windows:** small rectangular windows located within the frieze, usually along the façade of a building.

**Gable:** the triangular end of an exterior wall at the end of a pitched roof.

**Ionic Order:** a moderately decorated order easily recognized by its capitals with spiral designs.

**Italianate Architecture:** characterized by a visually balanced façade, decorative brackets, and lintels over windows and doors; usually built with brick, and two to three stories tall with a low pitch roof.

**Lintels:** in Greek Revival architecture it refers to a horizontal block placed over two vertical members. It may be load bearing or ornamental.

**Pediment:** the triangular shaped front piece with a horizontal molding at the base and two sloping moldings on each side. A broken pediment's sides do not meet. An open bed pediment's base is not continuous.

**Pilaster:** a flat column that is attached to the wall for decoration rather than support; often found at corners and doorways.

**Portico:** a covered walk or porch that is supported by columns or pillars.

**Quoins:** alternating rectangles of stone or brick used at the corners of a building for corner support and stability.

**Stucco:** a plaster-like material made of lime, sand, and water; often spread over adobe brick or other masonry.

*Did You Know?  
Settlers reused and  
recycled their  
buildings and building  
parts. An example can  
be found at 4560  
South Wagner Rd,  
where a Greek Revival  
structure is now used  
as an outbuilding.*

# 19th Century Greek Revival Architecture Forms

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## Temple Front:

Built to resemble Greek Temples, defining characteristics include a large front facing gable with columns and a pediment. Examples include the Wilson-Wahr House and the Ladies Literary Society.



## Hen and Chicks:

Unique to Southeast Michigan, the “hen” has a front gable and a two story central core which resembles a temple front. The “chicks” are one story side wings. Examples include the Douglass-Nanry House and the Tubbs House.





### One-and-a-Half Form:

Characterized by a one-and-a-half story rectangular core with frieze windows to provide light and air circulation to the upper floor. Examples include the Brinkerhoff-Burg House and the Treadwell-Popkins House.



### Upright and Wing:

Usually consists of a two story rectangular portion with a front facing gable, and a one-and-a-half story wing attached on one side. Examples Include the John Stanton House and the Pope House.



This information is meant to supplement the Washtenaw County, MI Greek Revival Architecture Driving Tour, which can be found at: [http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/community-and-economic-development/workforce-development/historic preservation/heritage-tours-new](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/community-and-economic-development/workforce-development/historic%20preservation/heritage-tours-new)