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The Treatment of.
Present Day Domestic
— Interiors —

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#16/6/22

The treatment of interiors especially domestic interiors is of very great importance, and has far-reaching effects.

One lives in the house, and it should be so treated that it bears contact and living with continually—

The interior is probably more important than the exterior, as nature lends a kindly hand covering up exterior defects.

Interiors must be considered as a whole— One cannot have a beautiful interior with articles excellent in themselves unless those articles are well arranged and have a suitable background and harmonise with one

another - Likewise each room may be charming in itself; but if not considered as part of one whole it is lacking in effect - Like beautiful but incongruous beads on a string -

The basis of good decoration like most things architectural is plan - well selected and adhered to.

Unity and Variety -

Few interiors seem to be studied as a whole and those that have unity seem to have it at the expense of the equally desirable and necessary quality "variety"

Disunity is bad - The unhappy effect ~~and of~~ viewing a number of rooms all excellent in themselves; but out of harmony with one another is



Breakfast Room Showing Panels "Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter." Delano & Aldrich, Architects

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*Colour introduced in the form
of mural decorations.*

the inevitable result.

We want our home to be a restful habitation, but we must have variety and cheerfulness -

One must have both unity and variety -

One unity must exist in many directions, walls, ceilings etc, but one of the most important is colour.

Colour and Colour Schemes.

It has been said that "Form and Colour are twin foundation stones of Art."

It is impossible to plan a scheme of decoration without reference to the universally interesting subject of colour. -

Yellow is useful to lighten a dark



DINING ROOM, HOUSE AT OYSTER BAY, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.

DELANO & ALDRICH, ARCHITECTS

Mural panels in the manner of early eighteenth century pastorals serve to relieve the appearance of austere formality of the chaste classicism

room - Red is warm, blue is cool
in some shades cold -

Green is light, quiet and cool and
blends well - white used with
colours heightens their effect - Black
reduces and lowers them. 2

A room needs some accent, which
may be related or opposing -
e.g. A Tan room may have a
accent by a yellow bowl of
nasturtiums or perhaps better
still a blue bowl.

There are some delightful shades
a blue, but it is hard to get
blues which tone with one another.

Blue is not a good night colour
whereas yellow is -

Grey is very useful for backgrounds



LIVING-ROOM.

SUBURBAN RESIDENCE IN MASSACHUSETTS.

James Purdon, Architect.

Panelled walls - Furniture well placed.

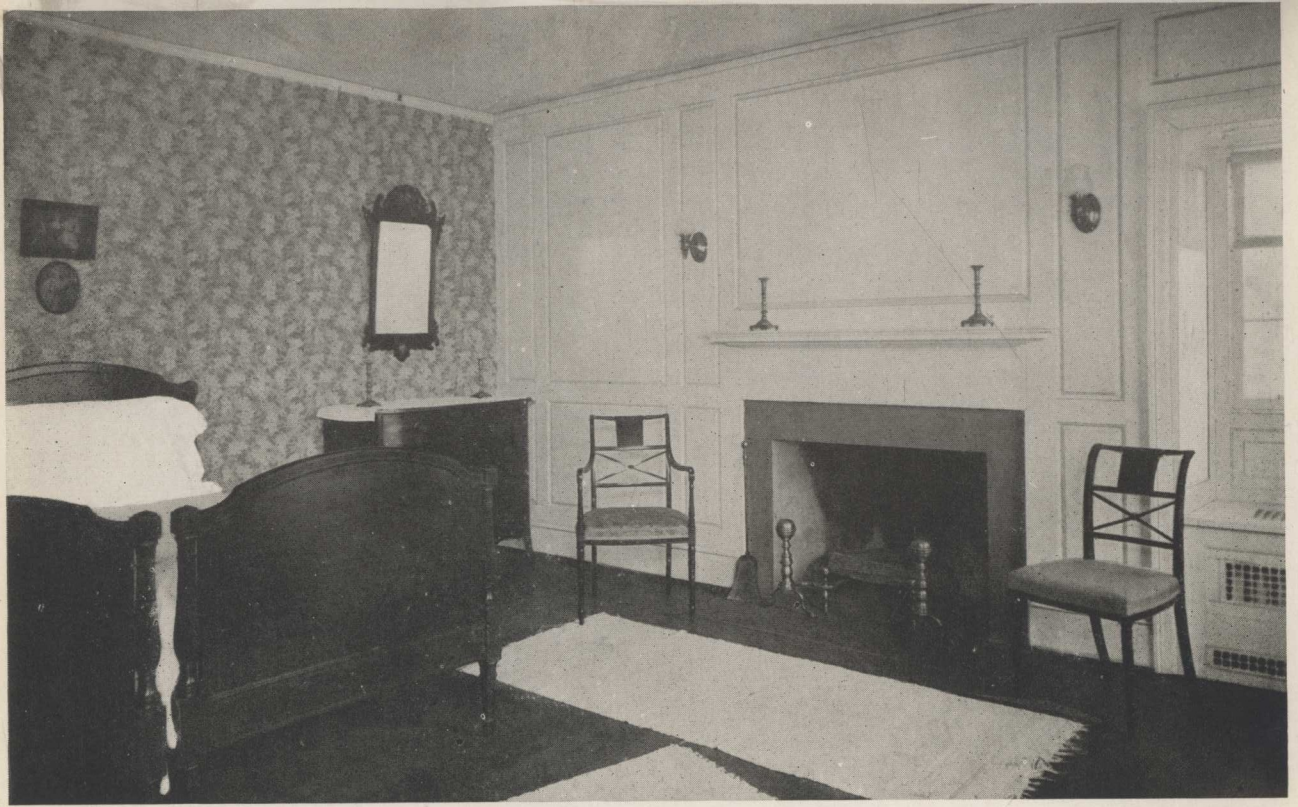
The value of colour is a very important consideration as also is Scale -

Treatment of Walls -

The treatment of walls is one of the fundamentals of decoration.

No furnishing however handsome in itself will constitute a good interior unless the walls also have been adequately studied.

Walls may be treated as a decoration or as a background for the furniture - The latter is better for small houses also for flats and apartments not built for the owner as practically any kind of furniture will suit the walls. or more correctly vice versa -



BEDROOM OVER DINING ROOM

*Panelled and papered walls -
Not the happiest combination*

Walls may be of many materials and of varying finishes

Walls may be of stone, - they may be finished in plaster of varying surfaces. Sand finished plaster walls are amongst the most effective -

The walls may be panelled in wood or plaster, or they may be papered - The choice of paper is very important - There are some quite delightful papers on the market, but there are some atrocities which form sad pitfalls for the unwary -

Walls may be with or without dado or picture rail - Where the latter is present - It should be in the form of a cornice to the wall and not in the form of a border



DINING-ROOM.

SUBURBAN RESIDENCE IN MASSACHUSETTS.

James Purdon, Architect.

*Pleasing arrangement of
furniture*

round the room. -

Walls may be white or tinted; but it should be remembered that no walls are dead white -

The furniture and hangings all cast a glow on the walls.

The walls should be lighter than the floors and generally, speaking, but not always, the ceiling will be the same colour or lighter than the walls -

Floors and their Coverings

Floors should be treated as a foundation. Generally they will be darker than the walls, otherwise they are apt to have the feeling of coming up to meet one.

Like walls floors may be treated



HALL.

as a background or as a decoration

(a) As a Background -

A lot can be said in favour of fairly plain floor coverings - These with equally simple walls at once make sure of repose, even though we relieve them with strong colour

Rugs at angles all over the floor are disturbing, they should be laid parallel to the walls and in small rooms should largely cover the floor - In a large room a few small rugs may be used leaving the floor mostly bare.

The rugs should not be too numerous or of too contrasting a pattern and should "lie down" well on the floor.



SUN-PARLOR.

Illustration of Tile Floor -
Lamps quite nice here.

Needless to say rug designs should always be conventional -

(b) The Floor as a Decoration: -

Oriental rugs of great value - like everything else some good and some bad; but of the good ones Eastern rugs are amongst the best one can have -

For Domestic work it is advisable to avoid the wormy, angular, and badly proportioned designs, even when otherwise of merit.

Most Chinese rugs are of good pattern and colour and where procurable generally fit in and harmonize with nearly every environment.

Structural Floors: -

Regarding the floor as a foundation



DETAILS OF ENTRANCE HALL

Marble Floor in Vestibule
of Block of Slats.

will be found particularly appropriate when we consider such structural floors as light coloured tiles, white marble mosaic and cement, all of which are deficient in depth of colour - Red tiles make excellent flooring of good colour value, but have to use great care with tones with rugs and draperies are employed so as to avoid conflict.

Cement floors are very successful with borders of polychrome tiles or medallion-like inlays at intervals - These floors are very suitable for sun-rooms, loggias, bathrooms and the like.

The general method of treating floors these days is to have hard-wood floors stained and polished



FOUNTAIN IN END OF LOGGIA. (Cast aggregate with medallion of colored terra-cotta.)

*Tile floor and wicker
Furniture in Loggia*

and rugs placed on them -

Parquet floors of different patterns make very nice floors -

Windows and their Treatment.

The first consideration in the interior treatment of windows is to retain their purpose and yet enhance their decorative value.

Windows are necessary for light and ventilation; but a certain times there is too much sunlight and it is for the modification of this light that window hangings were devised.

Quite a lot of the charm of a room depends on the quantity and quality of light admitted.

The curtains should be in keeping with the room and express the

purpose of the room -

Generally speaking bedroom curtains are better simple - those for a girl's room may be light and dainty, but not too "dressy" whilst a man's room should express strength. Curtains in other rooms will be in accordance with the furnishing of such a room -

Long sweeping curtains in handsome apartments give an opulence of appearance, but for reasons of cleanliness it is certainly better that they should be a few inches from the floor -

Where the window only is needed and the sill has a pronounced extension it is best to only carry

curtains the to sill length;

It is advisable to carry them down to ^{the} woodwork under the sill as the draught is apt to blow the curtains out the window when open and soil them.

The architectural treatment of the window plays an important part in deciding upon the window treatment. If the architecture is good, it is best to keep the curtains inside the woodwork, but if it is bad of course the more one covers up the better.

Valances are often necessary to give a finish to the curtains and they are also a strong decorative asset. The effect of a valance is to lower a room, and this is sometimes an



advantage - Some very striking effects
can be obtained by a valance -

Generally they are of the same material
as the curtains; If the curtains are of
a plain material, a rich brocade
valance often enhances their beauty.

In Italian Decoration one frequently
finds a valance of wood, either of
plain surface or carved, painted
in either case with a polychrome
design and often gilded.

Among these are many charming and
original ways of treating curtains,
which cannot be dictated in a
written thesis but will depend on
the surroundings and the taste of
the decorator.

If there are any door hangings they

will generally match the window hangings
Furniture

There are four methods of furnishing
which may be mentioned

(i) International or Interperiod Decorating

This is by far the most satisfactory
method of furnishing a modern home
combining nationalities and periods
which properly accompany one another

(ii) One period Method

(iii) The "modern" Method

(iv) The non-committal method.

This latter should not be adopted except
where owners have modern furniture
of various kinds and of no particular
style and there is no alternative to
using it - With skill and care
homelike effects may be obtained



Not much need be said of Modern
decoration - In its more outie' aspects
it must be banned altogether.

In its saner forms it can be attractive.
It is an adaptable and inexpensive
style of decoration enabling those
occupying small houses or apartments,
if possessed of taste and judgment,
to secure good results by simple means.

Period Furniture

Not everyone can afford genuine
antiques and good examples of
certain special pieces are not always
to be picked up just when desired.

This method of furnishing must be
left to the extremely wealthy.

Fortunately one can get very good
reproductions of period furniture;

but one needs a thorough knowledge of furniture styles to detect the difference between a genuine reproduction, and a bad copy -

In choosing furniture, that should be chosen which suits one's needs best.

There have been few bad periods in furniture, and there have been some bad examples in all good styles so these can be discarded -

The furniture of its period was made to suit the times, and it expressed the feeling and habits of the times and while one may have a special admiration for one particular style, the others should not be discarded.

One room need not necessarily be exclusively furnished with one

suite of furniture - Some of the furniture should certainly be of one style to give a basis to the room; but a few other pieces of harmonising but different build add variety.

This like everything else can be overdone and one must avoid at all times having a museum instead of a home.

This leads us to our first and best method of furnishing - the International - interperiod Decoration -

One objection to one period furnishing is that the particular period chosen suited one particular country at one particular time and so does not represent us today.

Probably a bigger objection is that



ENTRANCE HALL

HOUSE AT RIVERDALE-ON-HUDSON, N. Y
DWIGHT JAMES BAUM, ARCHITECT AND OWNER

there are so many beautiful things that one can have that don't belong to the particular period chosen.

Realising the narrowness of this method followed one of larger scope to suit the varying tastes, by the employment of different period styles in the various rooms of the same establishment - A method that utterly violated the unities and the result presented the appearance of a series of show rooms in a decorator's shop.

The difficulty with period decoration in the past has been, that except in the hands of a few architects of distinction it has not been true to its name -

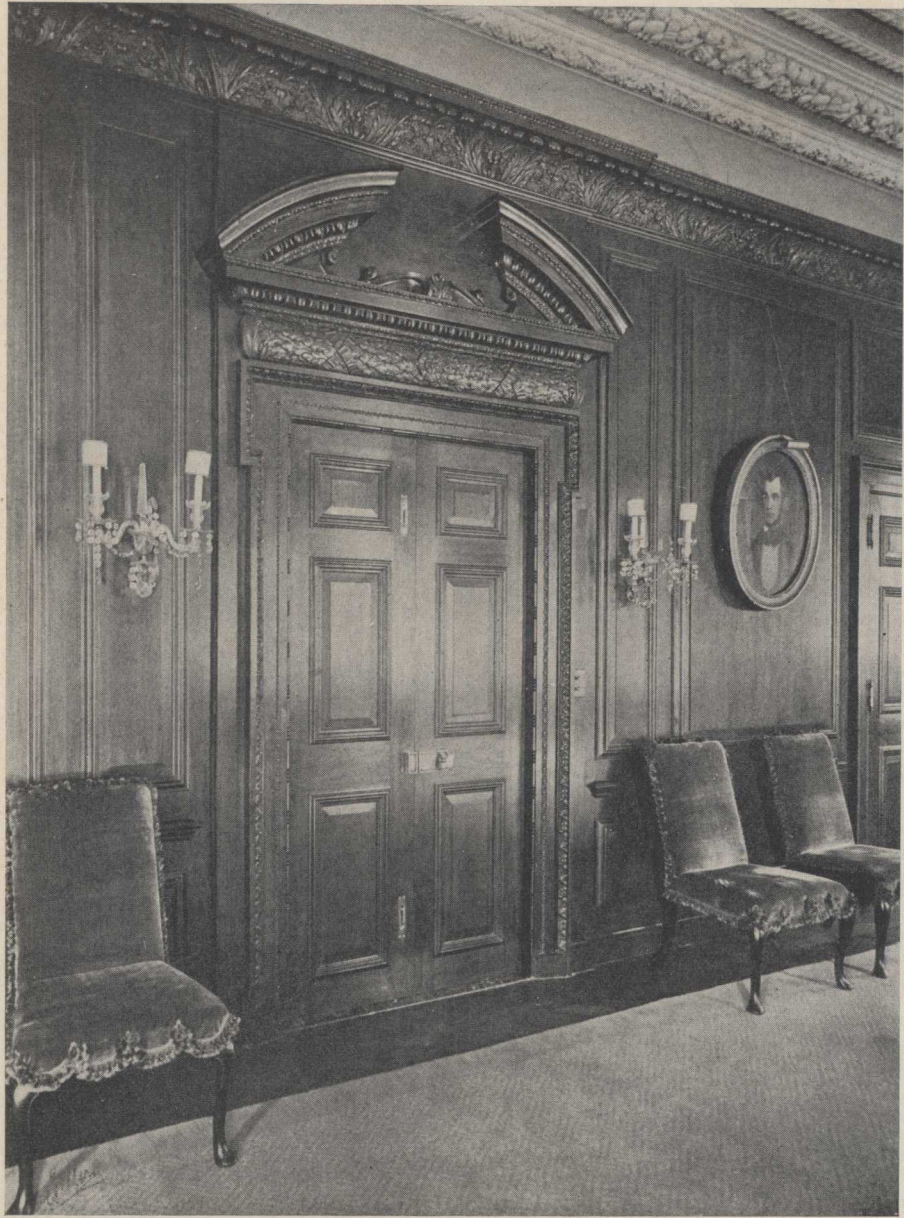
It has taken account of but one phase

of the existing movement and not that movement viewed as an whole and as manifested throughout neighbouring nations all under the same influence and decorative impulse -

It is the old fault of narrowness and insularity.

One of the first lessons learnt from an intelligent study of historic architecture should be that although of one period the treatment in different countries varied - eg. The Renaissance in Italy Spain, England, and France all had characteristics peculiar to themselves each adapted to the same style, ^{of architecture} to their climate and conditions. -

If period decoration is to continue in use then it must show itself adapted



to the changing conditions of modern life and circumstances -

It can be so adapted by any of the following methods -

If the premises are of an elaborate character and the means of the owner in accordance the more elaborate phases of the epoch may be chosen and followed -

Or with both large and small premises the simple and still decorative phases of any period may be adopted.

Period furnishing can be used with walls entirely plain but appropriate in colour and treatment to the period chosen - The above methods can be combined and the more elaborate decoration used for public rooms and



ENTRANCE LOGGIA, FACING 16TH STREET.

simpler for bedrooms, morning rooms
and sun porches etc.

Before leaving the subject of
choosing furniture one should mention
Wicker furniture - In its right place
it is excellent and suits the moderate
purse - Painted such tones as grey,
grey blue, grey mauve, sage green,
cream, or buff and accompanied by
suitable cushions these fit well into
bedrooms and in fact any rooms
which are not formal or luxurious
For the sun porch and the loggia one
can have little better - For the country
and the sea shore cottage they are
very adaptable -

The furniture having been chosen the
arrangement and balance of the furniture



BREAKFAST ROOM IN HOUSE ON LONG ISLAND, N. Y.

TROWBRIDGE & ACKERMAN, ARCHITECTS

Grouping of late Italian Renaissance chairs and Spanish table about an early Chinese painting against gray plaster walls. Subdued coloring predominates except for the pair of bright faience jars and chair covering

must be considered next.

The principal pieces of furniture should be placed first and their use will suggest the position. Balance is very essential.

It may be formal or informal

Formal balance is very applicable to stately rooms. -

Every large wall space should have a centre of interest about which the other objects may group - If such is not present it must be created.

A fire place often forms a chief centre of interest and one can often get a happy arrangement round a fire place - A settee or a chair and a table often forms a good arrangement if it comes naturally; but nothing is good which looks artificial

The treatment of corners should add a look of comfort to a room if well arranged. - Unless there is some particular reason furniture should not be placed diagonally in a corner, as an empty triangular space between the furniture and the wall is objectionable -

In setting out furniture it should not be strewn about the room - and overcrowding must be avoided -

If one cannot move about a room with comfort something should be moved aside or eliminated altogether. Large pieces of furniture should always be placed parallel to the wall.

The relative sizes of various accompanying objects must be considered.

The matter of weight whether real or

apparent is also important
Wooden mouldings are light, but they
shouldn't be of such a size that the
cornice looks as if it will pull the
ceiling down with it.

Stout rods with supporting flimsy lace
curtains, light delicate spindle
leg furniture with heavy beamed
ceilings, a Tudor house with dark
oak panelling into which has been
placed mahogany furniture, — all these
things are very inappropriate and
very unhappy in effect.

Interior decoration like a lot of
other things is really only common
sense — Most people have a fair eye
for balance and scale, when once
they see a thing; but the trouble is.

to make them see it. One grows used to the appearance of a room and doesn't seem to notice the defects. -

Not only must each wall look well in itself, but it must look well in conjunction with the other walls -

The diagonal view of a room should be well considered and the view from the doors is very important

Decorative Textiles

Given an unobtrusive background it is the decorative textiles which make or mar a room -

These include coverings of chairs, cushions, window curtains and a decorative feature not given enough evidence these days, namely wall hangings. Tapestries and rich brocades

needlework and embroidery, silks and velvets, Oriental and Batik hangings are all of the greatest use under appropriate conditions.

Scale is very important here as elsewhere. The pattern in one piece of upholstery should not be out of scale with that in another.

One important consideration is that things should be chosen "in loco" as it were. - One cannot finally decide what will be best without actually putting the articles in position -

I don't know if all furnishers here will allow goods to be sent on approval but I know some shops will send rugs and samples of material on approval and this be taken advantage of.



LIVING ROOM FIREPLACE

HOUSE OF DR. LYNN FULKERSON, FIELDSTON, NEW YORK, N. Y.

DWIGHT JAMES BAUM, ARCHITECT

Artificial Lighting -

This subject is of decided importance in interior treatment

The lighting may be fixed or portable or a combination, but whichever it is the same principles apply.

A glare is objectionable, and several subdued lights are much nicer than one bright light.

It is quite unreasonable to have a bright glow of light near the ceiling and the rest of the room in gloom -

Although various methods of indirect lighting eliminate glare and secure diffusion and often quite admirably so - still they throw most of their light on the ceiling

This does very well for public places but it is not comfortable in a home.

If the lighting by day is good then the night lighting should give the same effect.

It is not necessary to have the artificial light fall from precisely the same quarter as the light by day. but it is very desirable and eminently logical to have the light at night coming from approximately the same level as the daylight and to illuminate, not the ceiling, but the region of the room humanely inhabited.

Mellowness is the most desirable quality for Domestic lighting except in case of a hall room or similar room where brilliancy is often desirable.

The illuminates to be considered upon grounds of decorative desirability are candles, oil, gas and electricity.

Candles are delightful if properly used; but for general use I'm afraid the disadvantages far outweigh what artistic advantages they may have -

A candle in itself is an object of grace and beauty, but its chaste and dignified simplicity of line is marred and hidden when its shaft is surmounted with a shade -

The light given by Oil lamps is quite agreeable to the eye and satisfactory upon decorations and furnishings -

Gas unless shaded and tempered in varying degrees is trying to the eyes and colours suffer under its rays.

Electricity is convenient and clean and its brilliance commends it to those that like floods of artificial light

When used for Domestic purposes electric light should be judiciously shaded - otherwise it is trying to the eyes and casts sharp exaggerated shadows.

Considered from the point of view of convenience or decorative propriety it is indefensible to mount electric bulbs on top of imitation candles -

They are so patently shams and are foolish in view of some of the really admirable and satisfying fixtures that competent designers have devised. Fixed lighting appliances may be divided into two groups

- (i) Those that depend from the ceiling
- (ii) Those that are affixed to the walls.

The first group includes chandeliers, hanging lamps, hanging lanterns and drops

The second group includes sconces, wall lanterns, grandoles wall lamps, and sundry sorts of brackets. Impressive and large chandeliers are appropriate in large and stately or formal rooms; but in small and informal rooms they have no place at all.

Portable lighting appliances include candlesticks, candelabra, torches, and standing lanterns as well as the numerous family of lamps.

In addition to their obvious usefulness candlesticks are a strong decorative asset. Those of period form are the best because they are the best designed.

The ideal lighting for a living or dining room is of course side lighting

with lighted candles or lamps on the table — Even when not in use candle sticks should never be without their candles as they are incomplete without

In general for the modern well furnished home it may be said that the only sources of artificial light worth considering are side lights, lamps and candles.

If these the lamp is continually in use. Above all things the choosing of a lamp must be done with care — Many traps have been laid by the commercial picture man for the unwary.

The lamp is likely to become the centre of interest in a room and must therefore be good.

Bowl shaped lamps often give a more.

homelike effect than a pedestal lamp; but where space is to be considered a pedestal lamp is certainly the best.

Bowl shaped lamps are made of almost every conceivable material, but amongst the best are those of porcelain and pottery with silk or parchment shades.

Most beautiful of all are the Chinese Ware lamps -

Landelabra and other standard lamps have always played an important part in interior furnishing. They are especially appropriate with floors of marble mosaic, and tile, and decorated or sand finished walls.

Shades -

There are shades of all shapes and materials - The pattern, scale and



Note here and elsewhere - shades
on tops of candles -
These are not satisfactory.

spirit of the lamp and shade must not be incongruous.

If one is conventional and the other is naturalistic the spirit in each is opposed and will annoy.

The shade should not come too far down on the lamp or it will look clumsy, and if too high it will be skimpy.

The lines of the shade and lamp together should make a pleasing contour

Mantel Decoration

The mantel began as architecture and ended as furniture-; but whatever it is treated as it generally becomes a dominating feature in the composition of a room. Also as a focal point and fixed article of decoration it naturally serves as an intermediate



links between background and furniture

It is perfectly obvious that the overmantel space demands a suitable decorative handling. - That decoration may consist of a picture, preferably a portrait or else a subject of distinctly decorative character such for instance as some of the 18th century fruit or flower pieces, a mirror, a wall clock, an oriental screen of proper size or anyone of the various other devices that afford a suitable decorative emphasis and a point of central interest

The mantel shelf is one of the chief sources of decorative peril. -

It is probably the most abused piece of furniture there is -



Overmantel at Greenwich House, by Eugene Savage

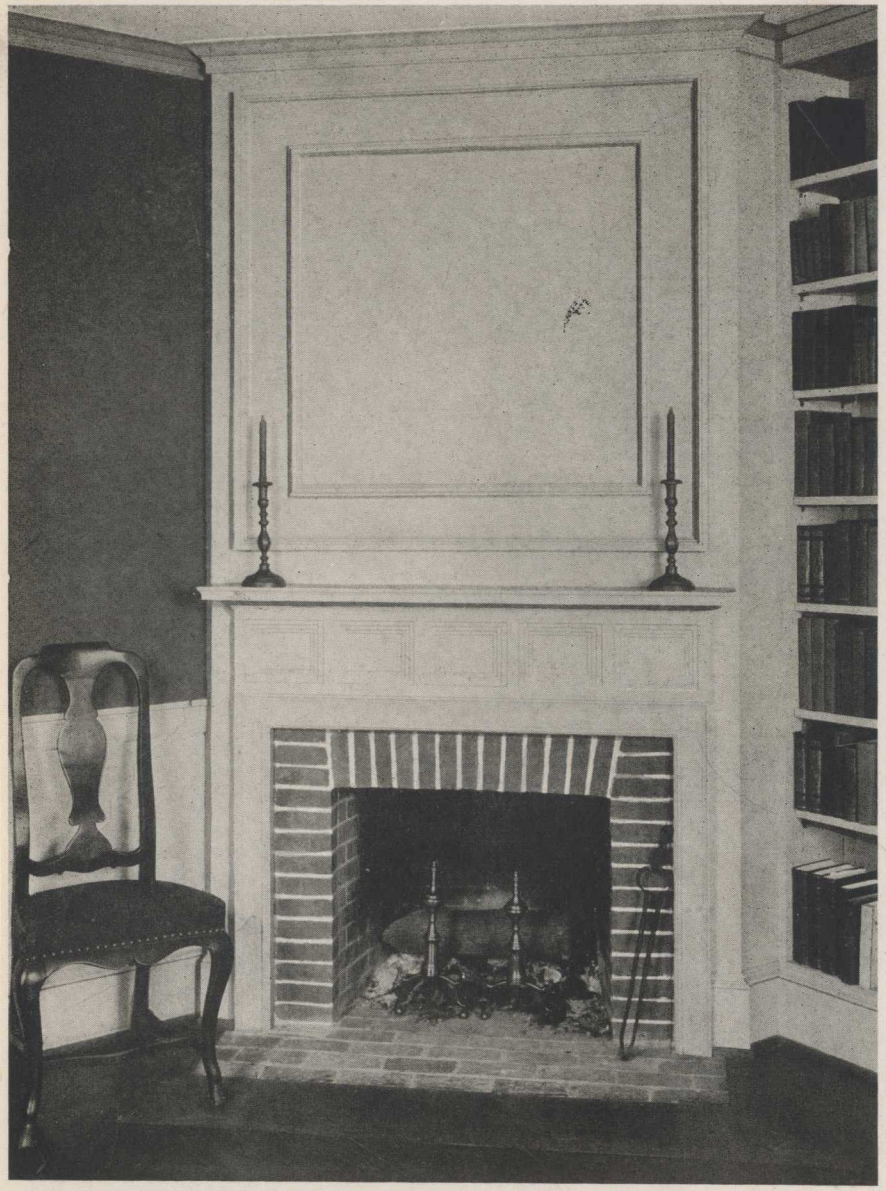
Overloading with all sorts of small and trifling articles should be avoided, and it is wise to refrain from placing photographs hereon.

(i) Restraint must be scrupulously exercised in determining the number and nature of objects on a mantle shelf. Have very few things and let each one be worthy of attention.

(ii) Suitability demands that the garniture be in character with the overmantel decoration and the general structural environment.

(iii) There must be propriety of scale. The objects composing the garniture must be of a scale to accord with the whole mantel and overmantel composition.

(iv) Symmetry must be maintained in



disposing the different objects
I There should be concentration of interest
either on the overmantel decoration or
the garniture.

II The principle of Contrast requires that
the effect of the mantel garniture be direct
and not muddled in its appeal to the eye.

Stencils on any account should draperies
be allowed on a mantel - The principle
is bad and impracticable.

Pictures and their Framing -

One could write an essay on pictures alone
but the primary considerations only can
be mentioned here -

One of the first suggestions one might make
with regard to many modern homes is
that they remove nearly all the pictures
from the walls - One should have a few



TWO VIEWS OF LIVING ROOM IN REMODELED HOUSE, NEW YORK
DELANO & ALDRICH, ARCHITECTS

pictures rather than many and those few should be good.

If the wall surface is highly decorative as with bright coloured paper effects no pictures should be used.

Pictures are part of the decoration and as such should be consistent and proportionate. In buying pictures one should always consider the position in which it is going to be placed - Generally speaking there will always be a place for a really good picture, but avoid placing a Holbein in a Rococo boudoir, or a distinctly modern picture in a room patently of the past.

Avoid monotony in the choice of pictures and above all one should avoid the hackneyed. Really good paintings in oil or water

colours are of course of the first consideration
Colour prints are amongst the most delightful
things at ones' command. - The original
18th century French and English prints
are now almost priceless, but there are
excellent reproductions at fair prices as
well as trawlers which should be shunned
at any price. -

Non-tint reproductions, lithographs,
etchings and drawings are admirable
for libraries, men's rooms, professional
offices, and living and other rooms of
a scholarly or rather plain character

Generally speaking wide and heavy
frames are appropriate to the solid
medium of oil colour, and lighter and
slenderer mouldings are used for water
colours prints and the like.

Glass is not usually employed over oil paintings, except when they are of moderate dimensions or of great value.

The protection from dust and gas fumes afforded by glass is however, so great that it might more often be used than it is.

Glass must necessarily be used for the protection of all pictures painted or printed upon paper -

The frames for water colours should be slender, unobtrusive and yet beautiful in form and line - The pictures with strong contrasts or masses of dark colour naturally need greater sustaining weight of effect in the frames than do those of lighter and slighter nature.

Period pictures should be framed

in frames of that period, or ones that might have been used then.

Generally speaking the use of a brown or black wooden frame for a picture in colour is a derogation from the picture and had better be avoided -

The painted wooden frame is one well worth bearing in mind - These frames can be painted white, or the same colour as the dominant colour in the picture - These give highly decorative effects. -

Framed photographs are in general much better stood upon tables low book cases and such places than hung on walls.

The hanging of pictures is extremely important and seems to have

disturbed some minds. -

The natural height is that of the eye or a little above it; but as there is usually some piece of furniture below, the picture should be in due relation to and form one group with that object and those that may rest upon it.

The accessories of vases, candlesticks etc. that may stand upon a Console or cabinet are of great usefulness in tying together the picture and furniture.

The triangular wire so often seen attaching pictures to the wall gives an appearance of unrest. - with the exception of an oval frame when the line of the wire carries up the line of the frame - Large pictures should be hung by two perpendicular lines