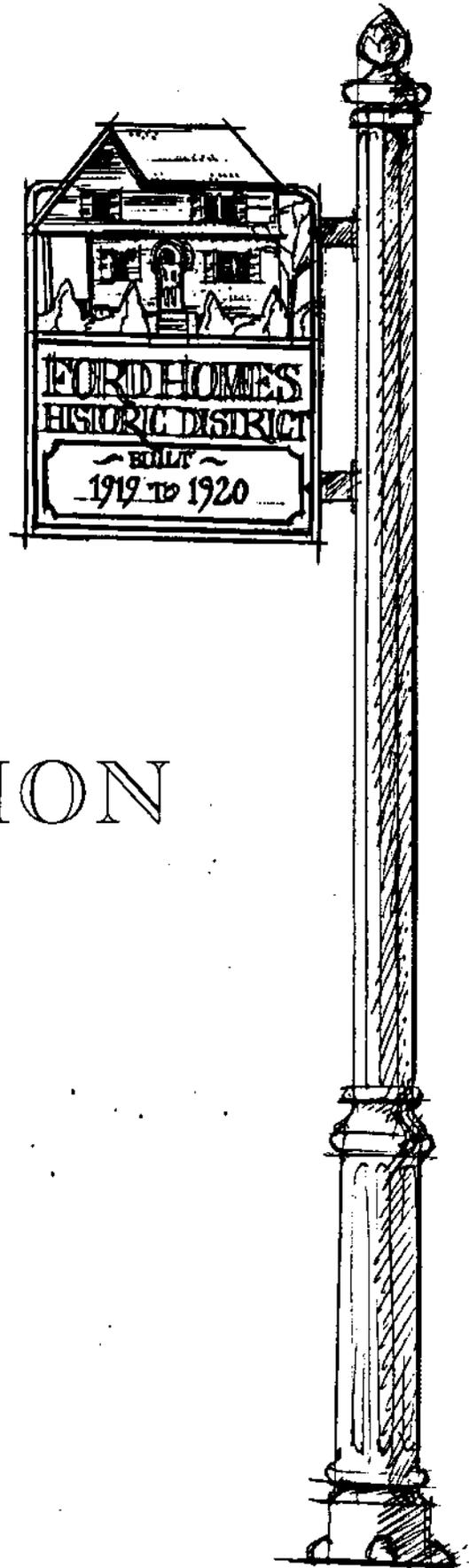


Ford Homes Historic District



PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

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FORD HOMES HISTORIC DISTRICT PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

THE FORD HOMES

The Ford Homes Historic District (FHHD) was formed by Dearborn City Council Resolution in 1979 to preserve the basic architectural/exterior appearance of the homes. The homes, built between 1919 and 1921, served as a housing development for Ford Motor Company employees. The use of standardized parts and assembly-line production techniques was a first in the housing industry and enabled the Dearborn Realty and Construction Company to produce quality housing at a low price.

Even though many changes have developed in the appearance of the homes since 1919, every reasonable effort should be made to maintain the character and distinctive look of the homes. The Ford Home is a unique piece of history with many unique qualities, one of which is its rich detailing. It is the intent of the Ford Homes Historic District to establish guidelines to help people understand the significance of the distinctive architectural features and character of the Ford Homes and to enhance this design superiority. The District strongly urges the preservation of these details and supports those homeowners who take the care to retain the character and integrity of the original Ford Home concepts.

The characteristics which set these homes apart are:

- distinctive architectural design or style
- asymmetrical balance
- sensitivity to proportion
- distinctive decorative detailing

Six models were originally planned. Models were assigned lots so that no two were next to each other and facade designs were mirror imaged or flopped for added variety. Ford Homes were not placed at an even distance from the street, but were staggered. Effort was made to make each house look distinct. See Figures 1 thru 6 for Models A, B, C, D, E, and F (Pages 2 thru 7). Later, thirteen four bedroom models were built to replace Model D.

The following guidelines are based on two important considerations:

1. Changes should be compatible with the original character of the home.
2. The exterior of the home, as it appears from the street, should maintain the Ford Home characteristics.

FORD HOME FACADE

The most visible characteristic of the Ford Home is, of course, the facade or street view. The various facade designs give the homes their classic iden-

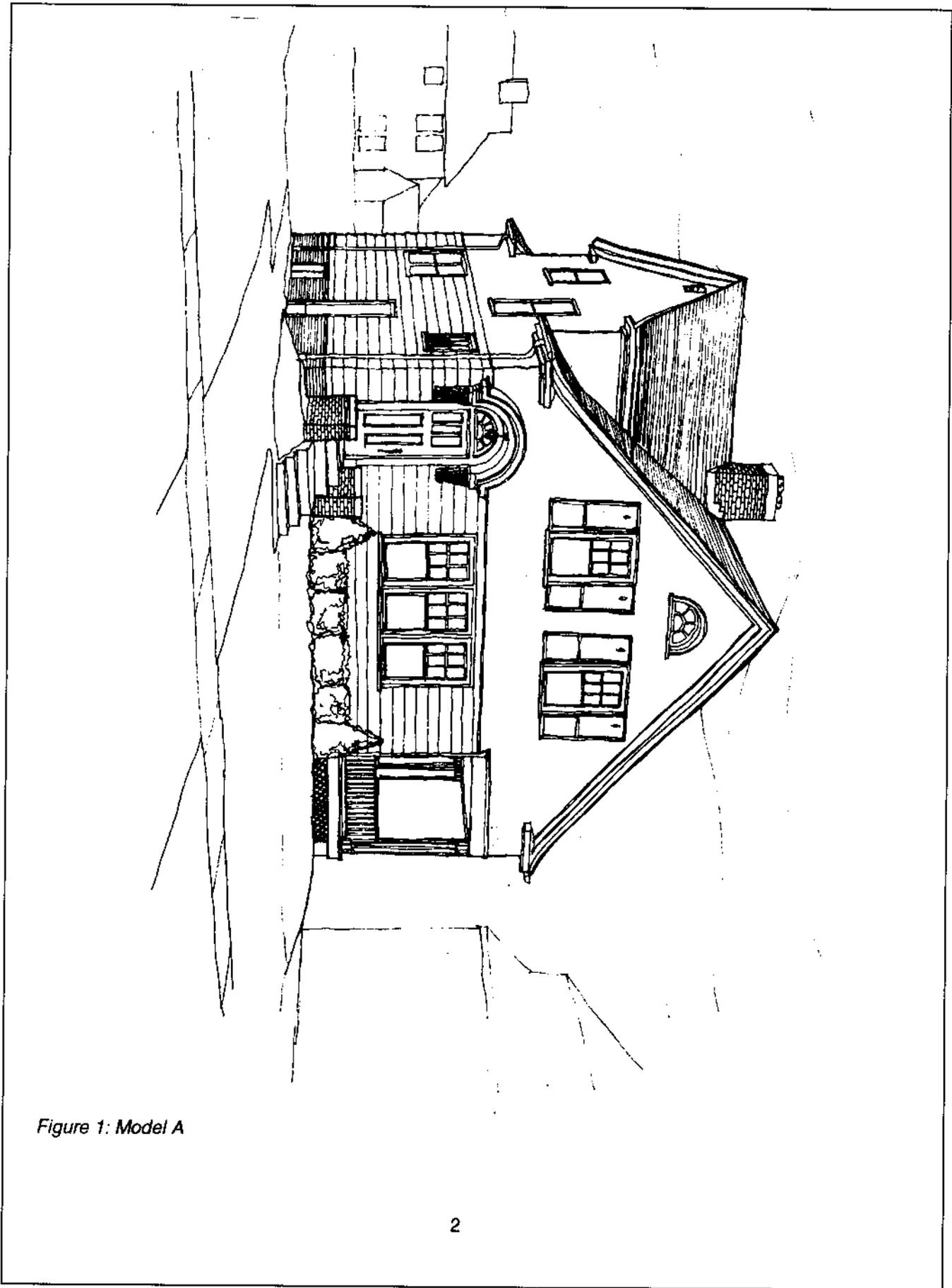


Figure 1: Model A

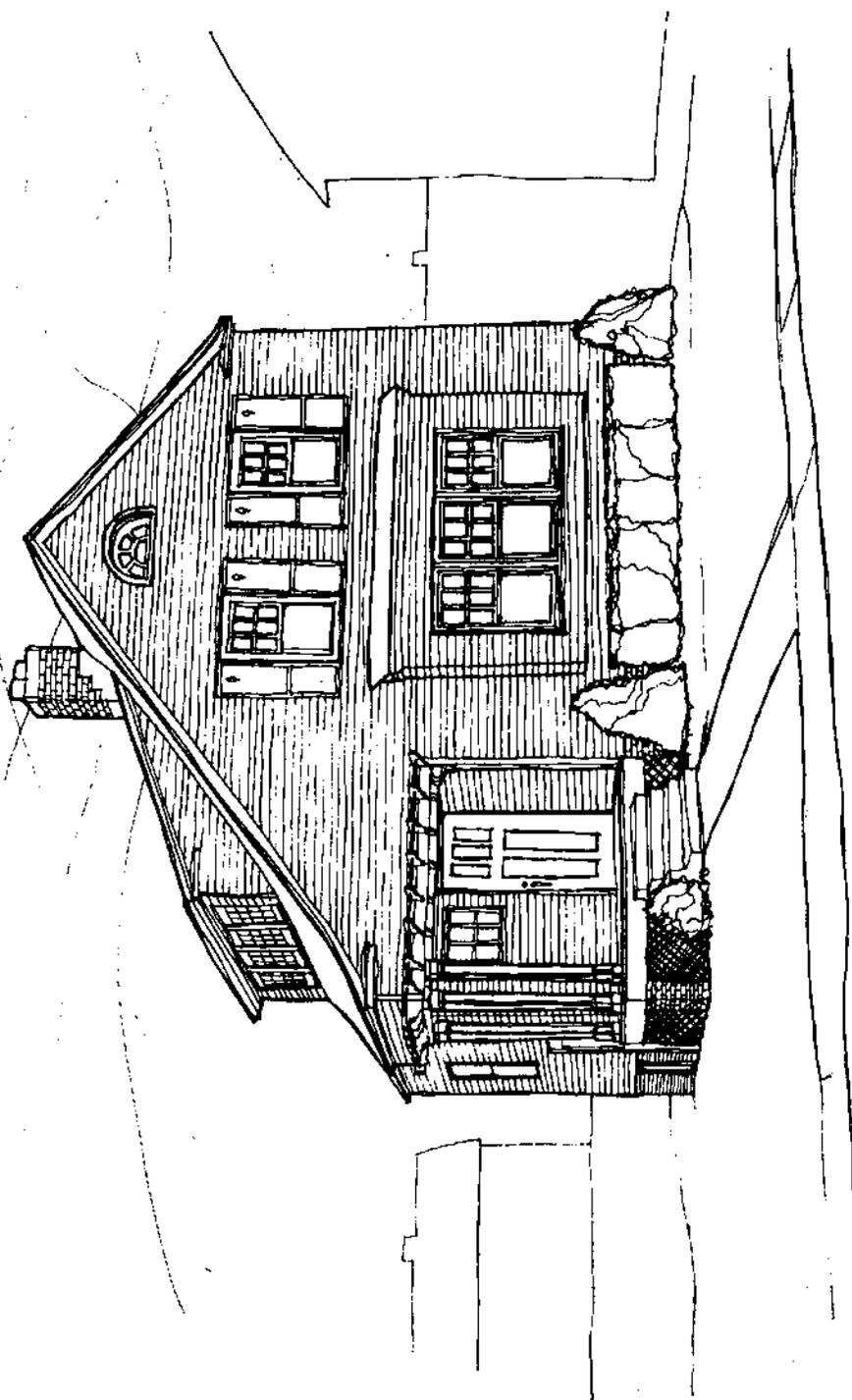


Figure 2: Model B

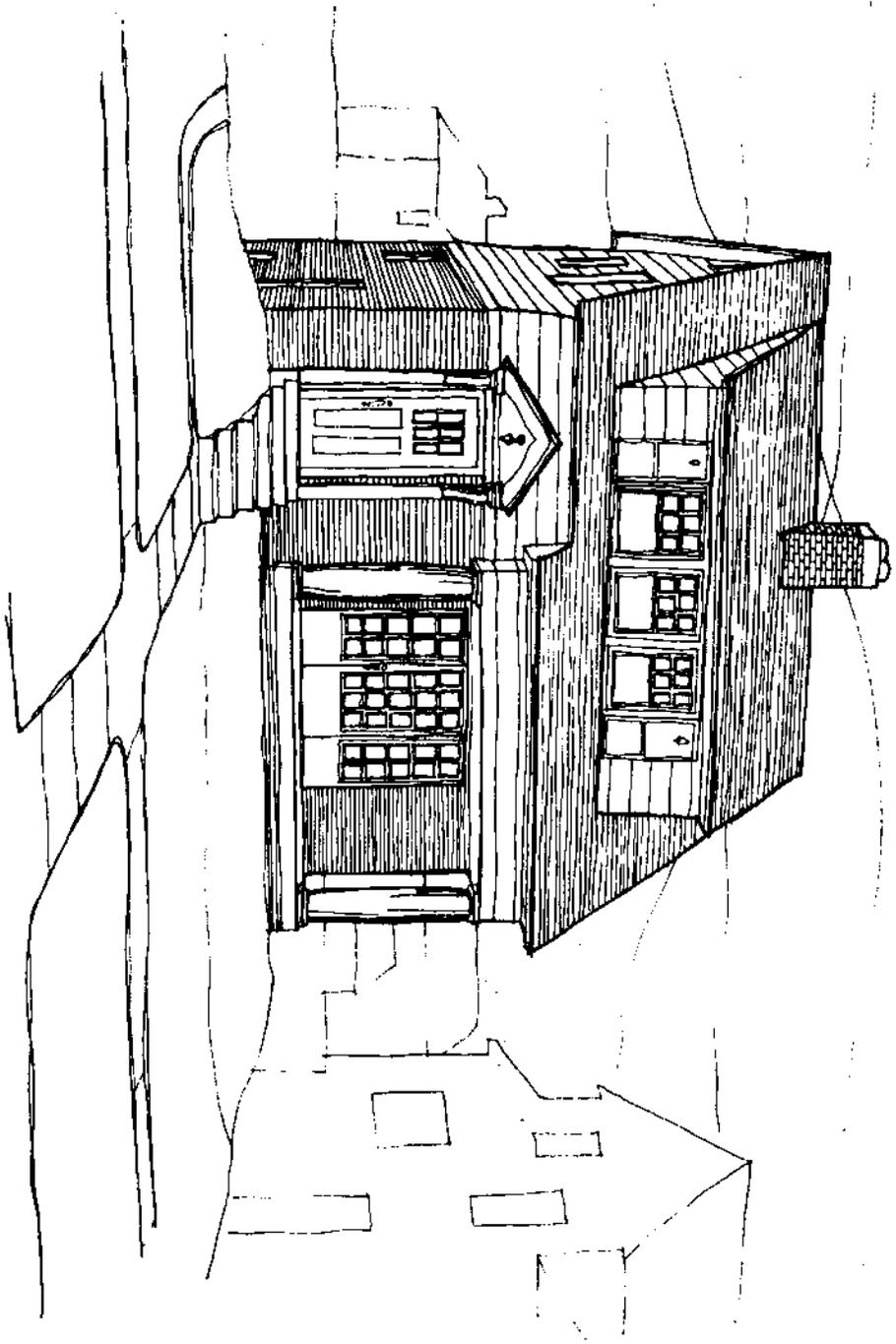


Figure 3: Model C

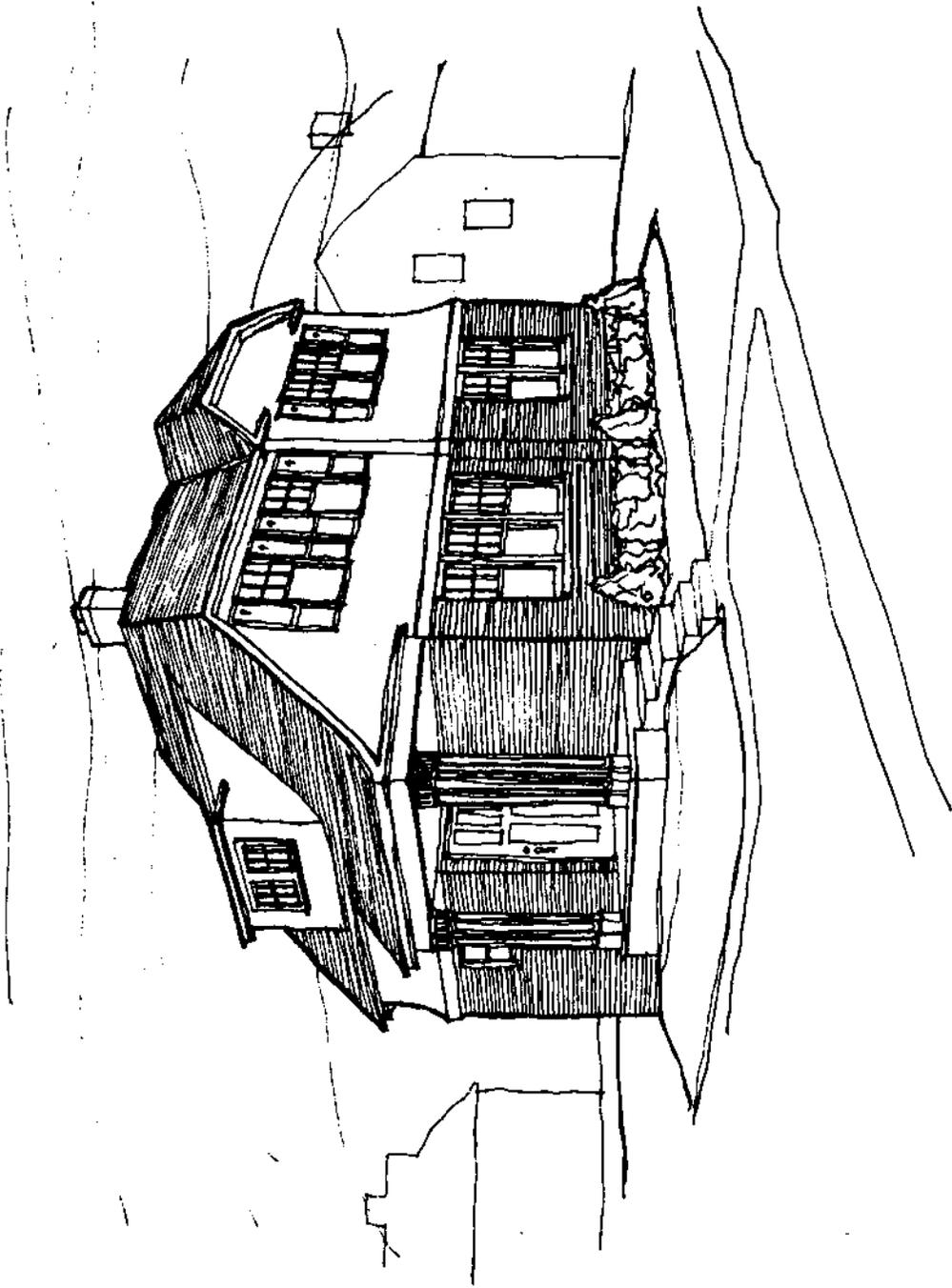


Figure 4: Model D

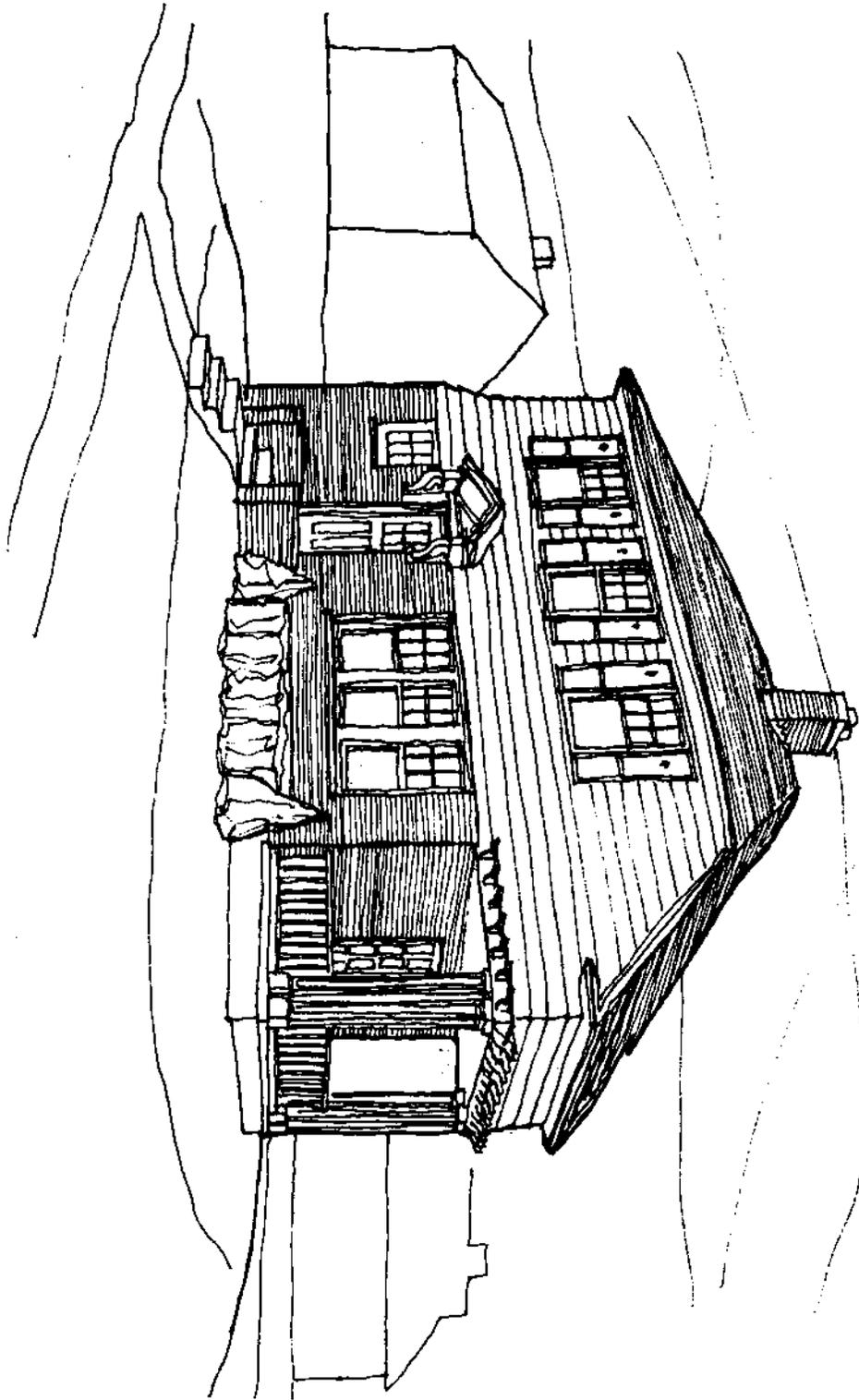


Figure 5: Model E

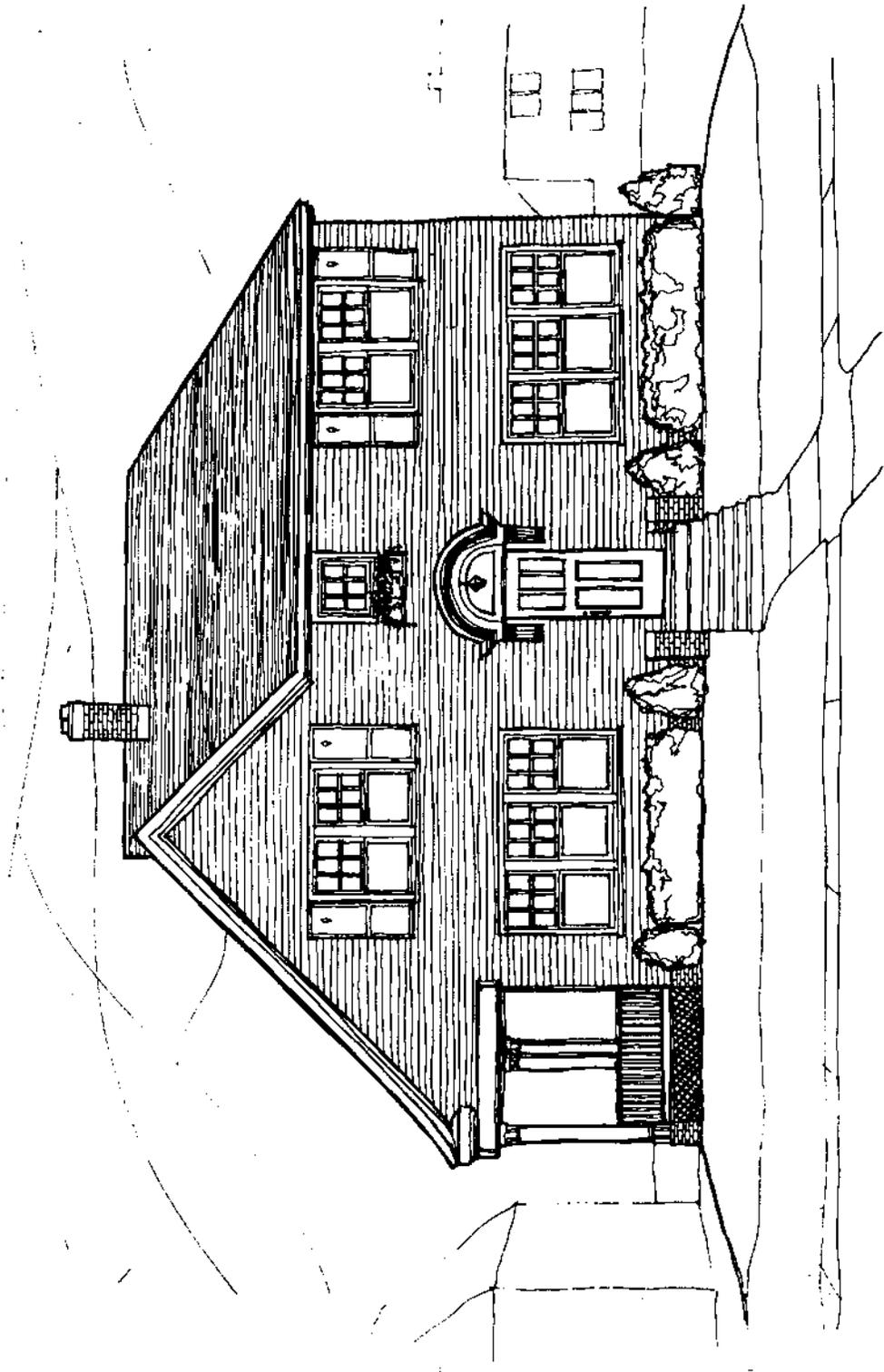


Figure 6: Model F

tity. Although the homes were designed in six basic styles (with one additional variation - the four bedroom home), their facades all have common elements which can be categorized as follows: entrance, fenestration, and architectural details.

Entrance

The entrance is the most important element (Figure 7). It is the focal point of the facade's composition, designed so that attention is drawn to it. It is de-

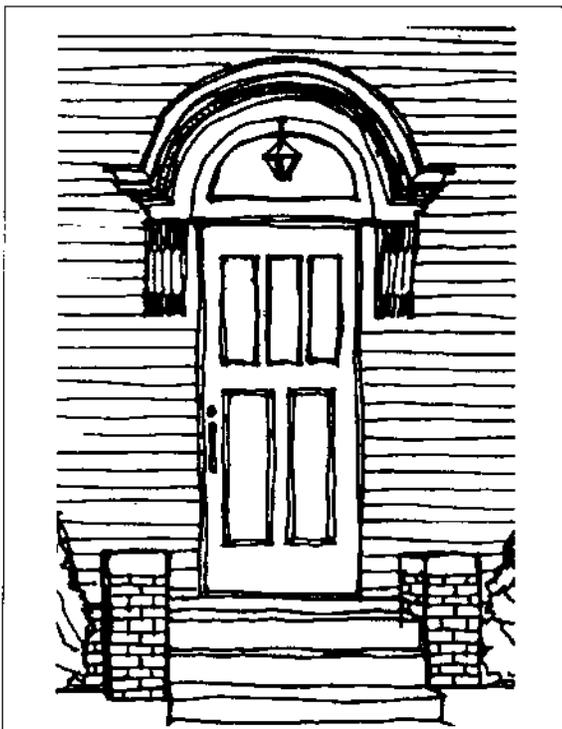


Figure 7: Ford Home Entrance

fined in all but two of the six styles by three primary elements: the pediment (curved or peaked), the scrollwork beneath the pediment, and the characteristic Ford Home door. The two styles which do not fit into this break-

down are Models B (Figure 8) and D (Figure 9). These styles combine the porch into the entranceway, which becomes the main focal point of the facade.

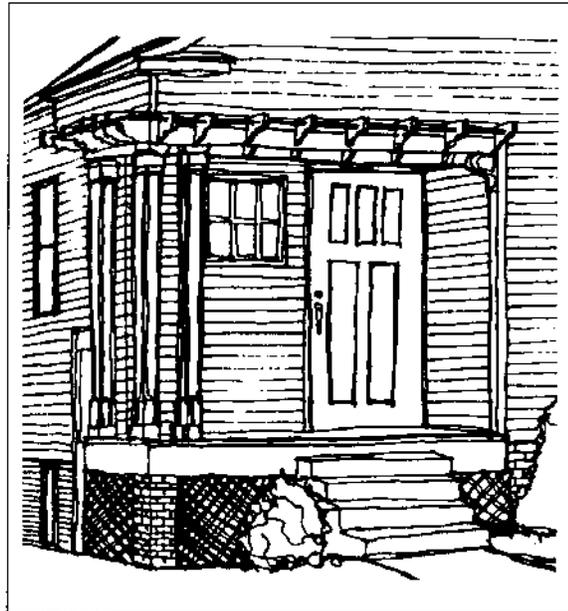


Figure 8: Model B Entrance

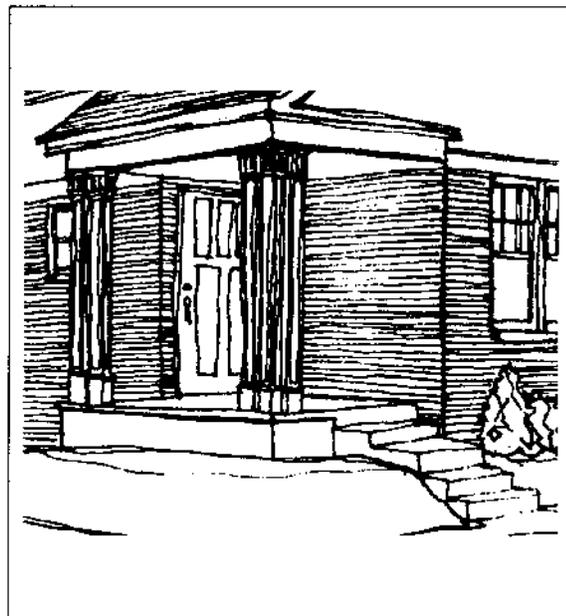


Figure 9: Model D Entrance

Pediment

The curved or peaked pediment (Figure 10) is probably the single most identifying characteristic of the Ford Home. It should not be hidden by canopies, awnings, or tall shrubbery and deserves to be maintained above all else. Although some have unfortunately been removed, examples of replacements can be seen at 22101 Edison and 22525 Nona. The scrollwork under the pediment is functional as well as aesthetic. It supports the pediment and is visually important to frame the entranceway. Six variations are original.

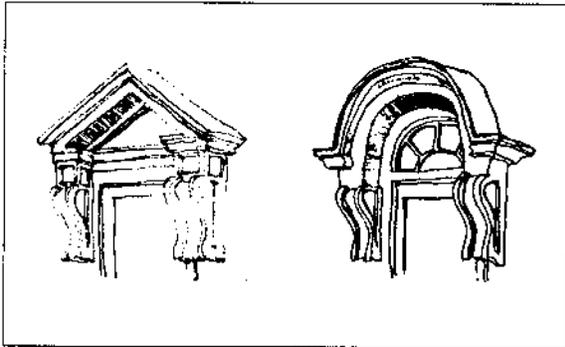


Figure 10: Ford Home Pediments

Door

The original Ford Home door comes in two styles (Figure 11). One has three panes of glass and the other six. Both are wood paneled below the glass. Elegantly proportioned, its beauty enhances the entrance. Storm doors should be compatible with the architectural character of the house and minimal in visual impact to the building's appearance. A full-view glass storm door with either wood or anodized aluminum frame would not detract from the entrance.

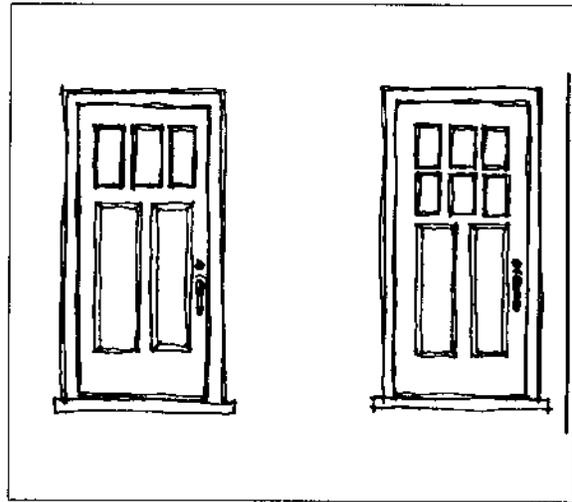


Figure 11: Ford Home Doors

Fenestration

The second major element of the facade is its fenestration. Fenestration deals with windows: their placement and proportion. The placement and proportion of Ford Home windows is standard on all the models and serves as a unifying element throughout the district.

Front Windows

The ground floor front windows of a Ford Home were placed with the top of the window in line with the top of the entrance door. Once the windows were placed relative to this height, they were then grouped in sets of two or three. The overall proportions of the front windows (with the exceptions of Model C and the smaller square windows found in Models F and E) are 2:1, the height being two times the width. The muntins, which frame the smaller panes of glass in the upper half of the window, have a proportion of 1 1/2:1,

the height being one and one-half times the width (Figure 12).

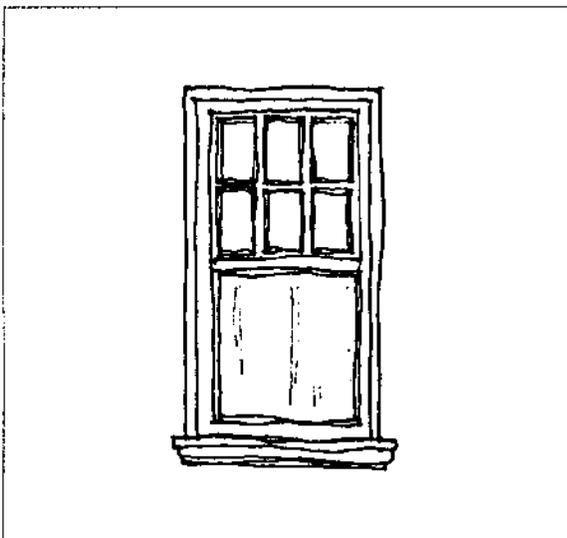


Figure 12: Ford Home Window

Another often over-looked window is the semi-circular (Park/Nona; Figure 13) or square (Beech/Edison/Fran- cis/Gregory/Military) attic window on the rear, side, or front of many of the homes. It is a characteristic detail and should be maintained, not removed if aluminum siding is planned.

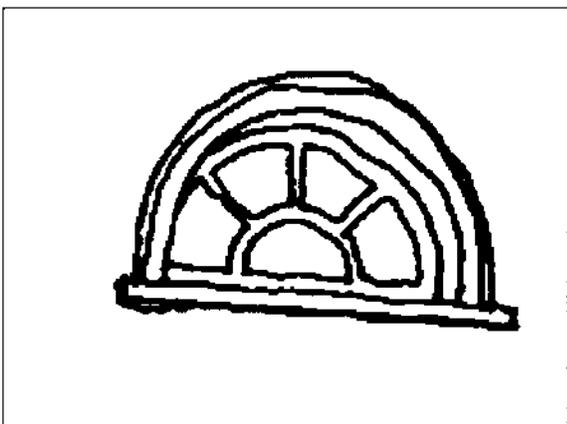


Figure 13: Ford Home Attic Window

Window Replacements

If the existing wood windows are in such disrepair that replacement is the only option available, then it is recommended that the upper half of the window have muntins in the same proportion as the original and that window size match the original.

Because of the importance of window placement and proportion to the basic character of the Ford Home facade, picture windows and bay windows are not recommended. Casement windows, picture windows, or doorwalls on the rear of a Ford Home are acceptable.

Storm Windows

Storm windows should be compatible with the architectural character of the house and minimal in visual impact to the building's appearance. Bright aluminum is not desirable. Interior storm windows are not recommended because of the potential for moisture damage to the sash or window sill due to condensation.

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Porches

The Ford Homes porch stands out as a major architectural feature that distinguishes these homes from any others. In four of the six styles, the porch is located at the side of the house, separate from the entranceway. In Models B and D, the porch and entrance are integral. The Model C porch spans the front of the house. To accommodate the space needs of growing families, a great

many of the porches have been integrated into the home (Figure 14). The aesthetic success of this type of addition is greatly dependent upon the window placement and proportion described earlier, as well as exterior material selection and detailing. (See "Additions", Page 15.)

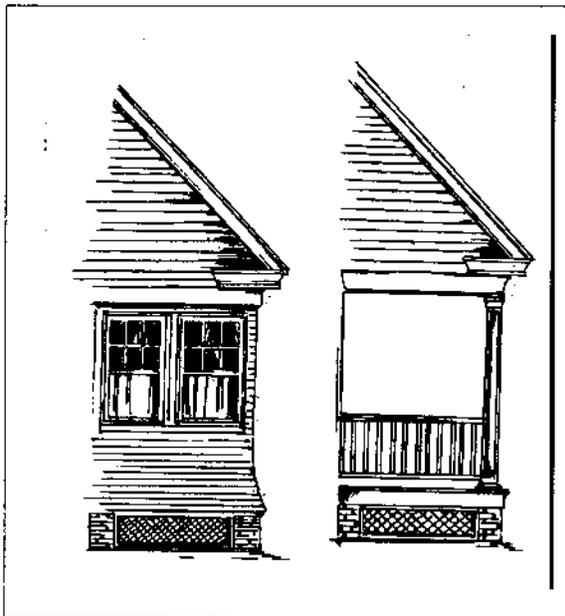


Figure 14: Ford Home Porch

Railing

If the original porch is still intact with its original wooden handrail (Figure 15), it is recommended that it be preserved, as there are not many left. Wooden replacement handrails can be purchased but should match the existing in height and design of the slats.

Columns

Sets of three columns framed the two outside corners of the porches on all the Ford Homes with the exception of the Model C home (Figure 16). Here the

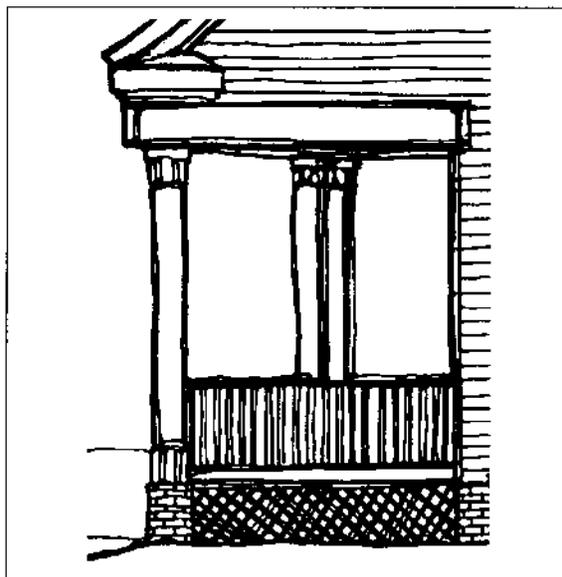


Figure 15: Ford Home Porch Rail

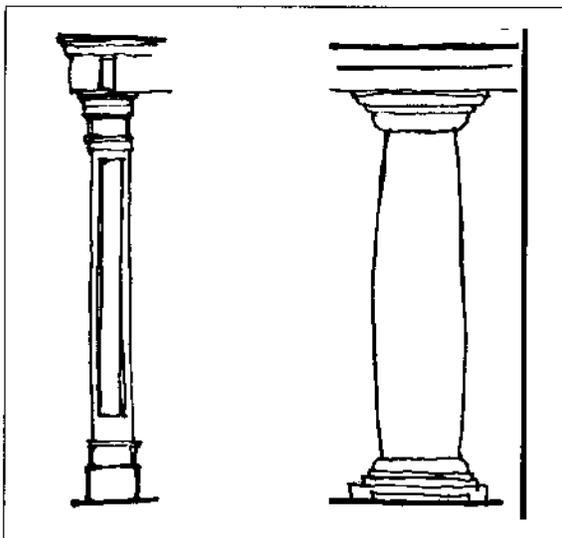


Figure 16: Ford Home Porch Columns

outside corners are supported by stately Doric columns.

In either case, the home gains a valuable aesthetic quality with these handsomely-detailed columns. A sense of permanence and craftsmanship are added. It is an unfortunate result that

some homes have lost this important detail during remodeling only to have them replaced with fragile-looking wrought iron or aluminum. These replacements neither have the mass, detail, nor aesthetic quality to serve as adequate replacements and are not recommended. Although the original columns might require some effort in maintenance, they are essential architectural details and should be preserved. If the columns are in disrepair and require replacements, every effort should be made to retain the character of the original appearance.

Wooden Porch Brackets

The other porch-related details are the wooden brackets (Figure 17) which trim the outside of the porch above the columns on Models B (Figure 18) and E. Many have been removed over the years. Replacements can be copied from the originals. An example can be seen at 22248 Edison and 22656 Nona.

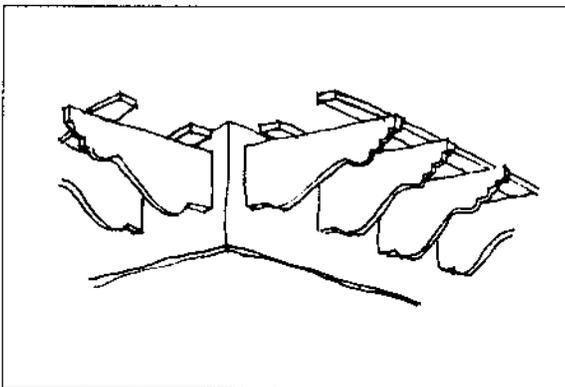


Figure 17: Ford Home Porch Brackets

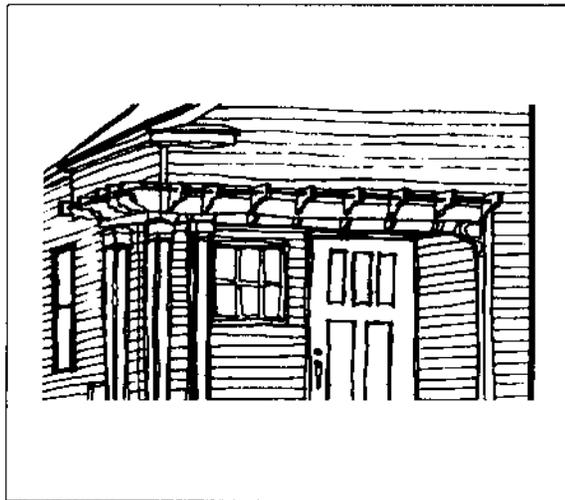


Figure 18: Model B Porch Brackets

Exterior Building Materials And Trim Work

Exterior building materials were brick veneer, wide or narrow clapboard, and cedar shake. It was Henry Ford's intent to create houses that were varied in appearance. Variety was achieved by varying the placement of these exterior building materials on the house, staggering the distance from the street, and offering a variety of models. Before considering aluminum/vinyl siding, take a careful look at the original building materials and the original wood window, roof, and door trim details. The District does not recommend the use of aluminum or vinyl siding on the Ford Homes as they are not historic materials, and some applications can destroy many of the homes' wood trim details (Figure 19). Asbestos siding, imitation brick or stone, or shingles are not appropriate.

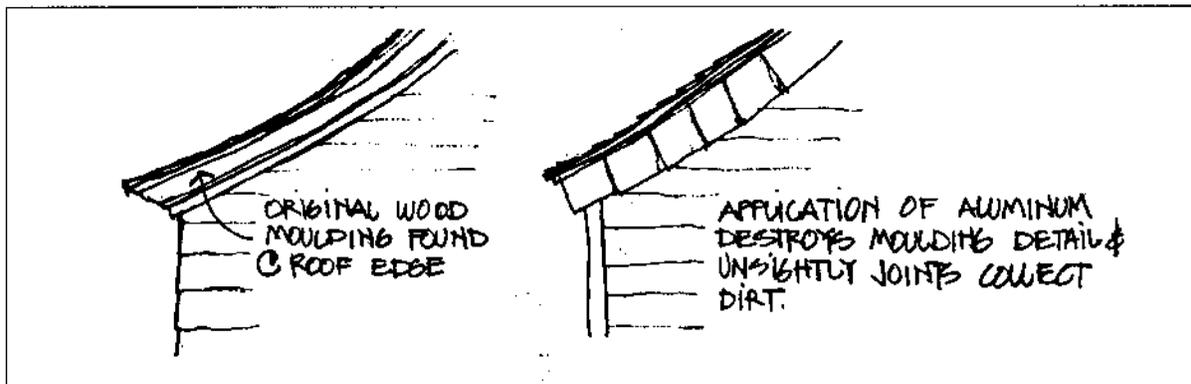


Figure 19: Ford Home Exterior Mouldings

Window Shutters

Window shutters were common to all the Ford Homes. They originally appeared only on the upper stories of the homes and consisted of a two-panel design with a small cutout in the middle of the upper panel. See Figure 20 for original designs. Replacement shutters should, of course, be the same size as the originals (sized to cover the window when closed; Figure 21).

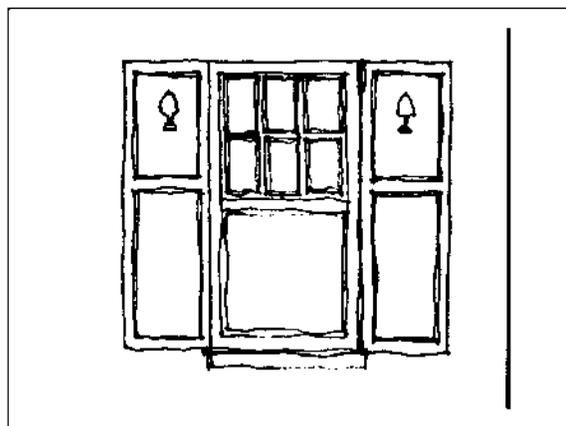


Figure 21: Ford Home Window Shutters

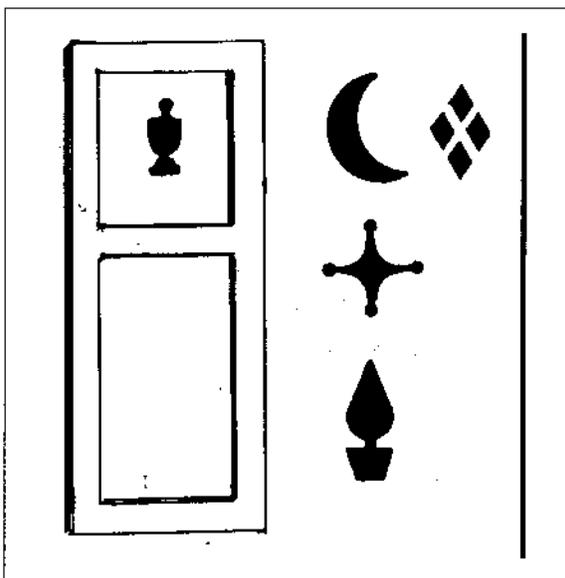


Figure 20: Ford Home Shutter Cut-out Designs

Porch Lights

The entrance to the Ford Home was originally lit with a single naked light bulb. Most of these have been replaced with a traditional style fixture and, more often than not, this modification does improve the character of the entrance. The only guideline here would be to select a fixture simple in design, appropriate in scale, and sized so that it does not hang too low from the pediment.

Planter Boxes

One detail that is unique to the Model F home is the planter box installed

below the small square window of the upper story (Figure 22). These original boxes are very rare and would be a unique detail to restore.

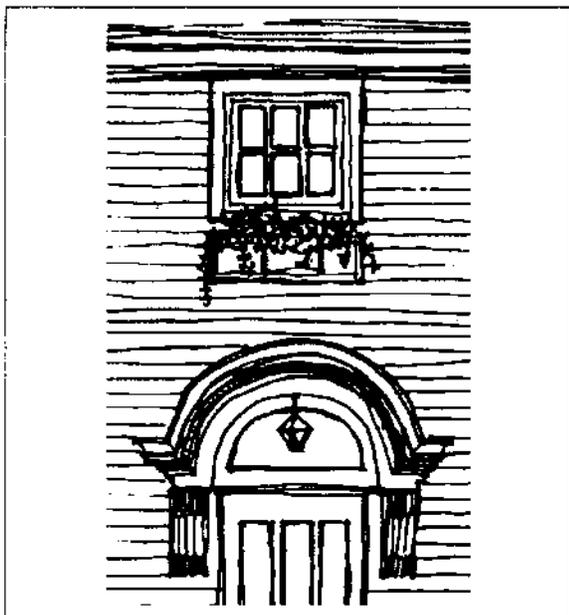


Figure 22: Ford Home Planter Box

Entrance Porches or Stoops

The original front entrance porches or stoops on Ford Homes varied in size and building materials. Some had brick side walls (Figure 23) and foundations with cement caps. Many were wood with wood side walls and cement steps. Replacement porches should follow the originals in size and shape as much as is practical. Dearborn Building Code specifies that if a porch is 30" above grade of the house, it must have a railing around it that is 32-36" high. By utilizing the terraced grade levels that were original to all the Ford Homes and incorporating only three steps, a landing, and then three more steps, it is possible to plan a brick and

masonry porch with side walls (no railings) that looks similar to the original. Color and size of the brick should be consistent with the brick used on the house.

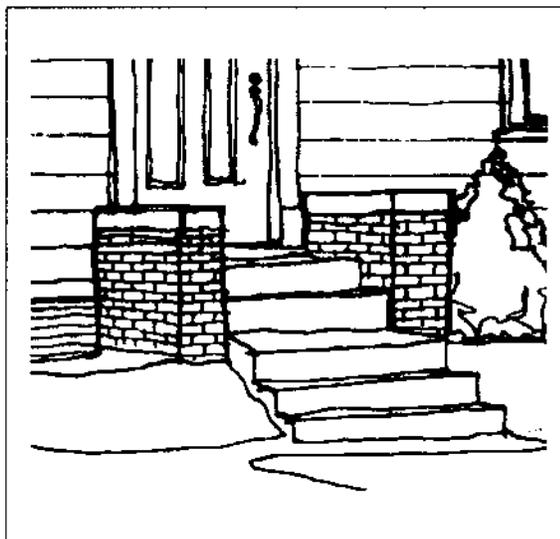


Figure 23: Ford Home Entrance Porch

Choosing Paint Colors

As far as can be determined, the original clapboard was white. The cedar shakes on the roofs and second stories of the homes were originally stained brown, red, or green. Choose colors that are muted enough to give a sense of harmony and continuity to the street.

Roof Colors

It is recommended that roof colors be medium to dark in tone, and that loud colors or patterns (checkerboard, etc.) be avoided.

Fencing

When fencing of a yard is planned, it is desirable to fence in a material that looks good and wears well. Wood

fences such as cedar or redwood are low maintenance. A wood fence has a warm feel and charm to it which reinforces the character of the Ford Home.

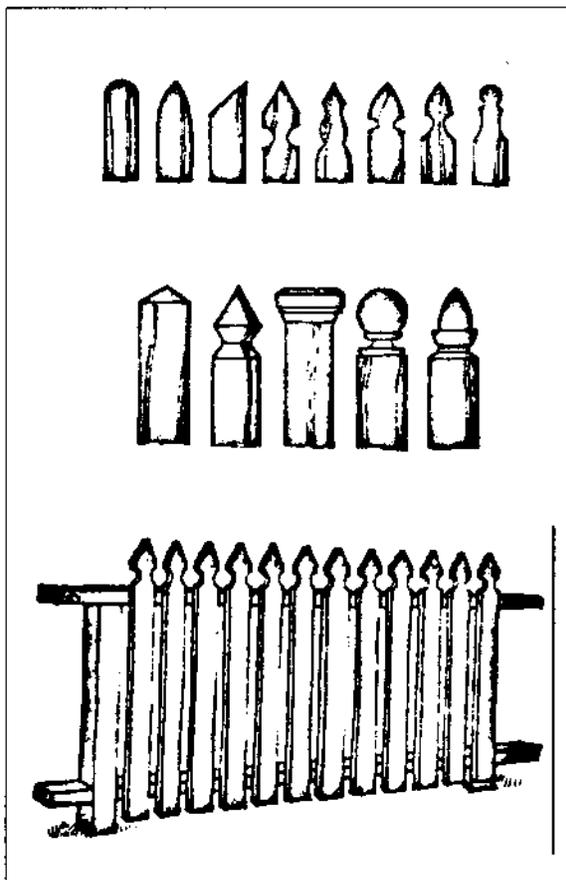


Figure 24: Ford Home Fences

The Ford Home is simple and classic in design with traditional embellishment. A fence would be appropriate if it was classic in design -- neither too modern nor too ornate. Many types of picket fences would be appropriate since milled lumber was fashionable and available to residents in the 1920s and 30s. A combination wire and wood post fence was used around many yards. Ornate wrought iron or embel-

lished Victorian millwork was not. Cyclone fences should be avoided if at all possible. Figure 24 illustrates some ideas for appropriate fences.

Trellis

Several owners have reproduced the original trellis that appeared on some of the houses. See Figure 25 for a line drawing.

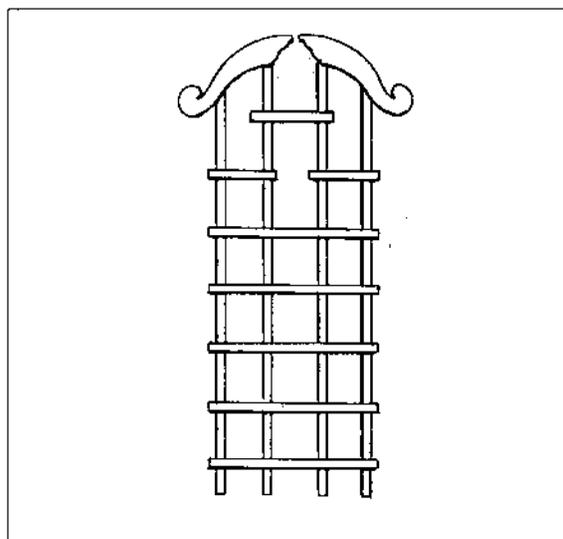


Figure 25: Ford Home Trellis

ADDITIONS

The design of an addition to a Ford Home can either take away from or greatly add to the home's value and usefulness. An addition which doesn't respect or follow the character of the home will look "tacked-on", creating a poor aesthetic impression. Good design doesn't necessarily cost more than bad design but definitely adds to the beauty and resale value of your home.

When designing a successful addition, follow these guidelines:

Compatible Roofline Pitch

Designing the addition's roof pitch to match the existing house costs nothing, yet it is one of the key characteristics of good design. This allows the new addition to look more integrated than an addition with rooflines not compatible with the existing home.

Similar Fenestration

Fenestration deals with window size, proportion, and placement. The new windows should follow the guidelines set in the "Ford Home Facade -- Fenestration" section on Page 9. The new windows should match the existing in height (align the tops of the windows), size, and proportion.

Compatible Exterior Material

Providing for a good match of exterior siding materials is very important for the success of the new addition. An addition to a brick building should be brick of the same size, color, and mortar color. If aluminum siding must be used for an addition on a brick home, try to avoid white siding and select a color that blends with the brick. If the addition is to be built to a sided building, then match the color and siding width of the original.

Miscellaneous

Some miscellaneous details to consider in the design of additions are:

- similar roofing materials
- simple chimney to match the existing
- matching roof overhangs

NON-FORD HOMES

The non-Ford homes are just as important in the District as the original 250 Ford Homes. Over the years they have blended into and become a part of the character of the neighborhood. All buildings, regardless of age, should be recognized as products of their own time. Attempts to make any house appear more historic or more contemporary should be avoided. Generally speaking, the guidelines for non-Ford homes would be the same as for Ford Homes.

- In accordance with Dearborn Building code, houses in a neighborhood should be compatible in color, shape, size, height, building materials, and architectural style.
- Rehabilitation work should not destroy the distinguishing qualities or character of the property.
- Whenever possible, deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, the new material should closely match the original in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.

- Additions should be compatible with the size, scale, and character of the existing home. Building materials, rooflines, windows, overhangs, and trims should

match those on the original building.

- New homes built in the District should be compatible with the size, scale, and character of the neighborhood.