



ARCHITECTURALLY INSPIRED
STAIR SYSTEMS



style

verb

styled; styling

Definition of style

transitive verb

1: to call or designate by an identifying term : NAME

2a: to give a particular style to

b: to design, make, or arrange in accord with the prevailing mode

Neo - Modern Style Homes

Today, as a society we are a cultural melting pot of diversity. This grand diversity is reflected in our clothing, our cars, and most commonly – our homes. The myriad of architectural themes that dot the landscape are a reflection of these cultures and the differences in “theme” that we take from history. Prominent architectural styles and themes have always been noticeable – dating back through periods of



Colonial Homes (Mid 1600’s through Mid 1800’s), Early Nationals (Late 1700’s – Mid 1800’s) Victorian (Late 1800’s) Period Styles (Early 1900’s) Modern Styles (Mid 1900’s) and Neo-Modern which is roughly the 1970’s until today.

It is hard to grasp the concept that anything built later than 1940 in America is “modern”; however, we are a relatively young nation in which substantial “residential growth didn’t take place until the end of the Second World War when soldiers returning from war moved from the city to the suburbs.” The houses that they built were in essence new and “modern” architecture. So, today most new homes are classified as Neo-Modern style that take aspects of Period Styling and incorporates them into new construction.

Stair Components in Neo-Modern Style Homes

Throughout history staircases have taken the world to new “heights”. Early artisans built castle walls and large circular stairs to reach turrets or outcroppings. Churches and religious sites built stairs to reach upper elevations for bell towers and areas for religious leaders to address their parishioners. A few “tipsy” knights and safety concerns ensued and handrails and guardrails were incorporated to aid the ascending and descending of the stair case. Throughout time most stairs were site built. Balusters and handrails were created and turned on-site using materials that were gathered from that region or were imported at great cost. Products were often crudely made but stood the tests of time. As we entered the machine age, products were shop built using mechanized lathes and pre-ground tooling which became more cost effective and added more consistency to the products. As we entered the modern age wood products were changed for steel products that could be pre-welded and delivered to the job site creating a less expensive alternative to the solution. Enter the Neo-Modern days and stairs range in wood species, metal and cable, glass and steel. This begs the question – “What stair components are right for my home design?”

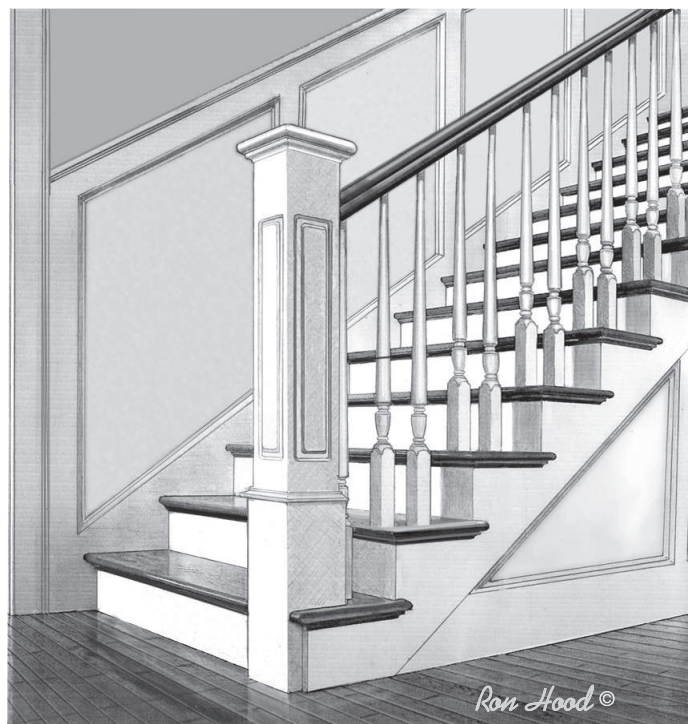


The Stair Component | How it all “Fitts”?

We would start by saying: Fitts by no means are historians of architecture. We are highly skilled wood technology, molding and turning experts spawned from the furniture business. Our founder Frank Fitts, Jr., founded the company post Second World War and the second generation of Fitts now crafts the finest production stair components in the industry.

Fantastic staircases evoke memories and inspiration. We know that like no other part of a home does a staircase have as an important a role as a utilitarian passage, as well as a focal point of dramatic emphasis. Stairs are a permanent piece of furniture in the home. People will pay a great deal of time and effort picking out fixtures, tile, countertops and trim and pay little time selecting the turnings and handrails on their staircases. In most cases the countertops and even tile will be ripped out and replaced, but that trusty stair will stand the test of time.

Fitts Stair Components run the gamut of architectural styles and themes. The task of selecting balustrade from the myraid of products that we offer can seem quite daunting. With a rainbow of species options and many prefinished wrought iron products there is an option out there for most Neo-Modern Styled Homes.



This catalog will suggest profiles and families of Fitts Stair Components for your stair project. Fitts Stair Components include products that have been popularized by homeowners throughout the decades. Our capabilities to turn custom and reproduction turnings are also available for Period home designs. If you don't see your specific products please do not hesitate to contact us.

About this Catalog

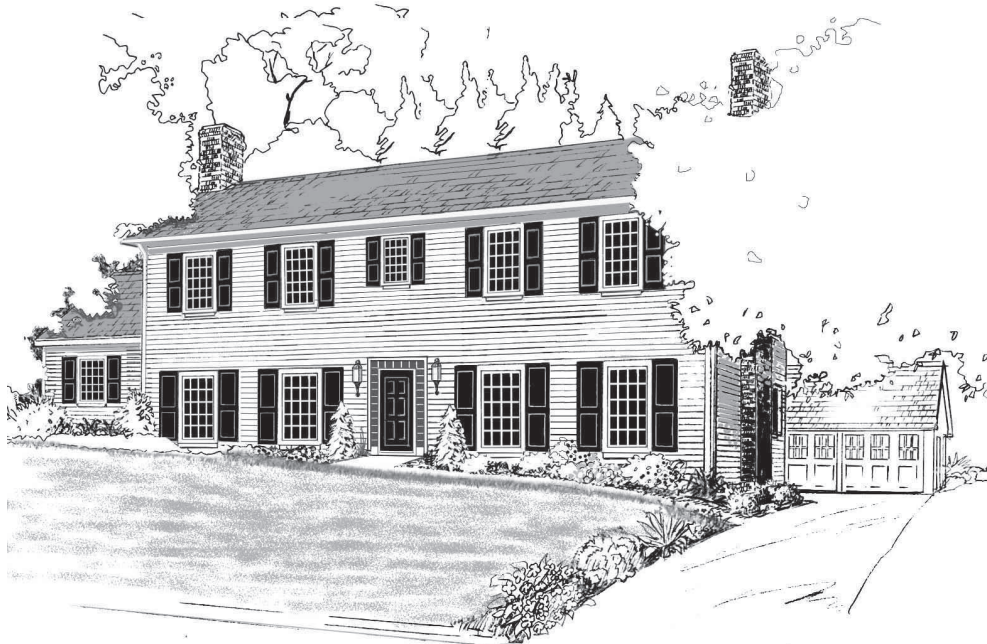
All of the illustrations in this wonderful piece were hand drawn by graphic designer Ron Hood of Cleveland, Tennessee. Ron has illustrated all of Fitts Stair Components catalogs throughout the years. Ron was a technical illustrator for NASA and is an accomplished sketch artist, painter, graphic designer, clockmaker, father, husband and friend of Fitts.

Neo-Colonial | Style Home

Colonial homes can be traced to America's European heritage and the quaint designs of English Cottages. These homes were generally known as the "Cape Cod" style and were constructed of wood "Clapboard" siding and had small paned, shuttered windows. It has been said that these designs protected a family through harsh and confining winters. Two story versions of these homes were called the "New England Large." Designs were a classic New England box design and gained the adoring nick name "salt box."

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Traditional millwork adorn the New England Neo Colonial design. Stair components are simple and traditional and feature species of wood that are indicative of the geography. European craftsman who had worked with Beech wood gravitated to the specie and is still prevalent in New England today. Other woods like Red Oak, Cherry, and Maple were also widely used.





Purist

\ˈpyur-əst\ *n.*: one who adheres strictly and often excessively to a tradition

Neo-Georgian | Style Home

Georgian style homes emerged as 18th century England embraced Italian Renaissance design, and understandably the twelve English Colonies looked to the homeland for modern design. In this period of history only the wealthy could own these large palatial homes. The design was balanced and included large rooms suitable for warm fireplaces and cooking areas. The Georgian style differed in the North where many of these homes were built of wood, whereas in the South they were constructed of red brick. Many popular designs included a hip or gable roof and later included Greek style columns. The Georgian name came not from the region of construction, but that as a namesake of King George I – IV.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Traditional and more ornately turned products such as Sheraton® would be architecturally relevant. Stair components are ornately designed and would have a regal and classical feel. Products would be fluted, reeded or twisted showing the wealth and taste of the owner. Balustrade would be painted, rather than kept in the raw to also demonstrate wealth and sophistication.





Exquisite

\ek-ˈsk wiz-ət\ *adj.* : 3. marked by flawless craftsmanship or by beautiful ingenious, delicate or elaborate execution

Greek Revival (Antebellum) | Early National | Romantic

A symbol of power and democracy, Greek Revival architecture embodies structural design dating back to 432 BC. With powerful and massive columns this style demonstrated wealth and power up and down the Eastern Seaboard and into the Deep South. Typical Southern Greek Revival architecture included “Piazas” or elevated front porches which were added as a way to “escape” from the southern heat. Most true Greek Revival homes hid windows behind the columns to provide the desired look of a temple. Most structures were also painted white to simulate a marble stone appearance.

Architecturally Inspired Stair System™

The Greek Revival architectural style would be indicative of giant grand curved staircases. Imagine “Scarlett” ascending the stair into “Rhett’s” waiting arms. Stairs would be acquisitively designed with ornamental decoration and lavish accoutrements like ornamental millwork. Twisted or fluted stair components would be consistent to the design and large sized decorative handrails would be used.





Grand

\ˈgrand\ *adj.*: 4. large and striking in size, scope, extent or conception

Rustic Mountain | Neo-Traditional

Rustic mountain homes incorporate features of Swiss Chalet and A-Frame construction and marry it to the modern comforts of design and function. Building materials often are natural materials such as stone and or log – beam construction. Roofs are typically steep A-Frame construction, made of wood shingles to shed the weight of winter snow and incorporate large windows to enjoy breathtaking views. Architectural characteristics attempt to work in as much of the outside world with the comfortable “liveability” of the modern Home.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Rustic mountain homes will typically utilize stair products that have natural wood characteristics such as slight defects and knots. Products tend to have a mission feel; however, more contemporary designs incorporate wrought iron. Mountain homes conceptually incorporate outdoor elements like rough hewn beams and posts to create a cabin or chalet dynamic.





Campestral

\kam-'pes-trəl\ *adj.*: of or relating to fields or open country

Spanish Colonial Revival | Period Home

A mixture of Spanish Colonial, and Mediterranean design features, this architectural style was popularized by Bertram Goodhue a famous California Architect. It was one of the first to earn its' own classification. This style home dots the landscape across Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Florida. Prevalent in warmer climates of the United States, Spanish styling was popularized by Hollywood when celebrities built Spanish Colonial style homes for their personal residences. These homes feature tile roofs, stucco and painted stucco exteriors and rounded doorways and windows.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Spanish Colonial homes mix many Earth tones and natural materials with wrought iron accents. Heavy exterior wrought iron fixtures, hinges and even doors carry into the home into combination wrought iron and wood staircases. Wood Species commonly used would be: Red Oak, White Oak and Mahogany.





Saucy

\ˈsôs-ē\ *adj.*: Impertinently bold and impudent

Brownstone or Row | Neo-Traditional | New Urbanism

Encompassing entire city blocks, row housing is predominantly found in major metropolitan cities. Brownstone homes were typically found in Eastern Cities; however row housing can be found in many major cities like San Francisco. These buildings are usually two and three stories, and share walls with the adjacent buildings. Eastern row houses were usually constructed of brick or stone and had simple double hung windows. Western row houses differed slightly in that they had large bay style windows and were often painted or ornately decorated. Today, many loft dwellings incorporate the sophisticated styling of the traditional row home.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Many of these row style homes contained large box newels and starting newels. Millwork and trim will be used widely throughout the home. Similar to Craftsman style – many floor plans contain built in features to the home. The staircase becomes a necessary built-in feature due to the small footprint of these dwellings. Millwork can range from extremely simple features, to the most elaborate of design themes.





Sapid

\ˈsap-əd\ *adj.*: 2. agreeable to the mind

Tudor Revival | Period Home

Tudor revival style architecture gained popularity in the United States in the late 1920's and 1930's. This style incorporated the reproduction of timber beam construction that was a distinctive feature of quaint Cotswold cottages and early thatch roof medieval homes. Tudor homes can be found throughout the United States and have multi-paned windows, large fireplaces and can incorporate a wide variety of interior millwork styles.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Tudor homes incorporate old world design with modern mouldings and stair products. Similar to the Queen Anne, Tudor homes became popular during the advent of mechanized world and millwork would have a more “perfectly” machined construction.





Refined

\ri-ˈfɪnd\ *adj.*: 3. A highly refined distinction : subtlety.

Rambler | Post War Suburban

A staple of U.S. home design, the rambler is a split level constructed home, which meant it is predominately a one story design with half the home at a separate level. Ramblers were a combination of ranch style and colonial style architecture. Although many Ramblers are one story, some are split levels with different tiers that “hug the Earth” and the spaces they occupied. Ramblers usually have open floor plans that allow for an efficient use of space for a smaller footprint. Most homes are simple floor plans and use sparing architectural details on the inside and out.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Many ramblers were built in the 1950's and 1960's and stairs were often pre-fabricated iron which over time took a very dated appearance. Many of these homes have been refurbished and the updated styles include the use of iron balustrade and wood rails which give the home a modern feel. Wood species are fairly traditional with the use of American Red Oak, Hemlock and Beech.





Comfortable

\ˈkəm(p)-fərt-ə-bəl\ *adj.* : 1.a. Affording and enjoying contentment and security.

Rural Gothic | Farmhouse

Rural Gothic construction began in America in the late 1800's as carpenters recreated gothic points of emphasis like peaked roofs and peaked top windows. Many farmhouse structures were built with open porches that allowed an escape from hot summer sun and allowed a family an expanded outdoor living space suitable for cooler evening nights. Farmhouses were typically constructed of wood and many were available built from "Balloon" framing kits available from a large American retailer. Homes were framed kits that were easily constructed by only minimal number of laborers. The farmhouse takes roots from English, German, Irish, Italian and Pennsylvania Dutch settlers who settled in the fertile country side to make a living from the land.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Farmhouse staircase construction will be a strong, hearty design with a moderate amount of detail. Turnings will be predominantly made of American red oak, hard maple or a painted soft wood. Turnings would be traditional in nature similar to a Hampton© profile by Fitts.





Rusticate

\ˈrəs-ti-kāt\ v. : to go into or reside in the country: follow a rustic life

Neo-Contemporary

Contemporary architectural design took the prominent aspects of the machine age and incorporated them into residential home design. Pulling from lines of trains, airplanes and modern machines, architects in the 1930s began designing for the future. Walls are typically smooth with windows that continued through the home with a “seamless” appearance. These designs take characteristics of Art Nouveau as well as architects of the Bauhaus. Many of today’s Contemporary designs take on a minimalist form of design with clean lines and raw surfaces of wood, metal and even stone.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Contemporary homes would traditionally have little millwork and would have a rather “stark” yet simple architectural design. Stair components would typically be very harsh lined and smooth. Many builders include cable wire and or glass. Contemporary styles today incorporate minimalist traits that accentuate the pure sense of modern sophistication.





Dramatic

\drə- 'mat-ik\ *adj.*: 2.b. striking in appearance or effect

French Provincial | Period Home

French Provincial architecture is easily recognized by its' steep hipped roof designs. This particular period home combined French provincial and French farmhouse designs providing a Country French aesthetic. This style of home was popularized by soldiers returning from the First and Second World Wars: GIs took the steep hipped roof lines, shuttered windows and incorporated this into the modern day Period Home. Today, Country French designs are some of the more popular styles of home construction and design.

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Country French design incorporates a great deal of the subtle ornamental features that are emphasized with a warm “worn” appearance. The look has become popular by many American designers. Much of the millwork was painted and distressed. Many stair related items had pointed newel post and stair grade rails with the balusters achieving a well worn and “aged” appearance.





Stately

\ˈstāt-lē\ *adj.*: 1.b. marked by lofty or imposing dignity

Craftsman & Bungalow | Period Homes

Arts and Crafts style homes are identified by living spaces filled with hand made and natural materials, rather than machine made products. Early English architect William Morris whose beliefs later founded the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society designed structures with built in “predesigned” attributes such as stairs. Stair components were square and boxy sometimes with and Art Nouveau design. These earthy attributes gave the house a “handmade feel.” Arts and Crafts styles later inspired Bungalow style homes were wood homes with touches of Spanish and even Japanese influence. They shared the rustic simplicity of the craftsman. Bungalow homes became popular at the turn of the 20th century when builders could mass produce the design. The true roots were that of British Colonial India – or origination of the word Bungalow meaning “from Bengal.”

Architecturally Inspired Stair Systems™

Arts and Crafts style architecture would be conducive to modestly machined stair components such as simple square balustrade and boxy craftsmen newel posts. Products would be hand made or have a hand made appearance and would look as though it was part of the home – literally carved from the foundation. Wood species like Oak, Maple, Cherry, Poplar – stained or painted with a hand rubbed finish or luster would accent the stair.





Sparing

\- 'spa (ə)r-in \ *adj.*: careful in the use of money or resources

WORKS CITED

Historical research and creation of this piece was done by Fitts Industries, Inc. By no means do we consider ourselves historians of architecture; it was through interpretation and creative in uence that we were able to provide you a selection of stair components for these various architectural styles.

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