

# OLD-HOUSE

PERIOD-INSPIRED HOME DESIGN

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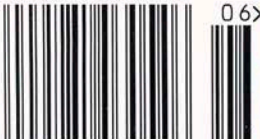
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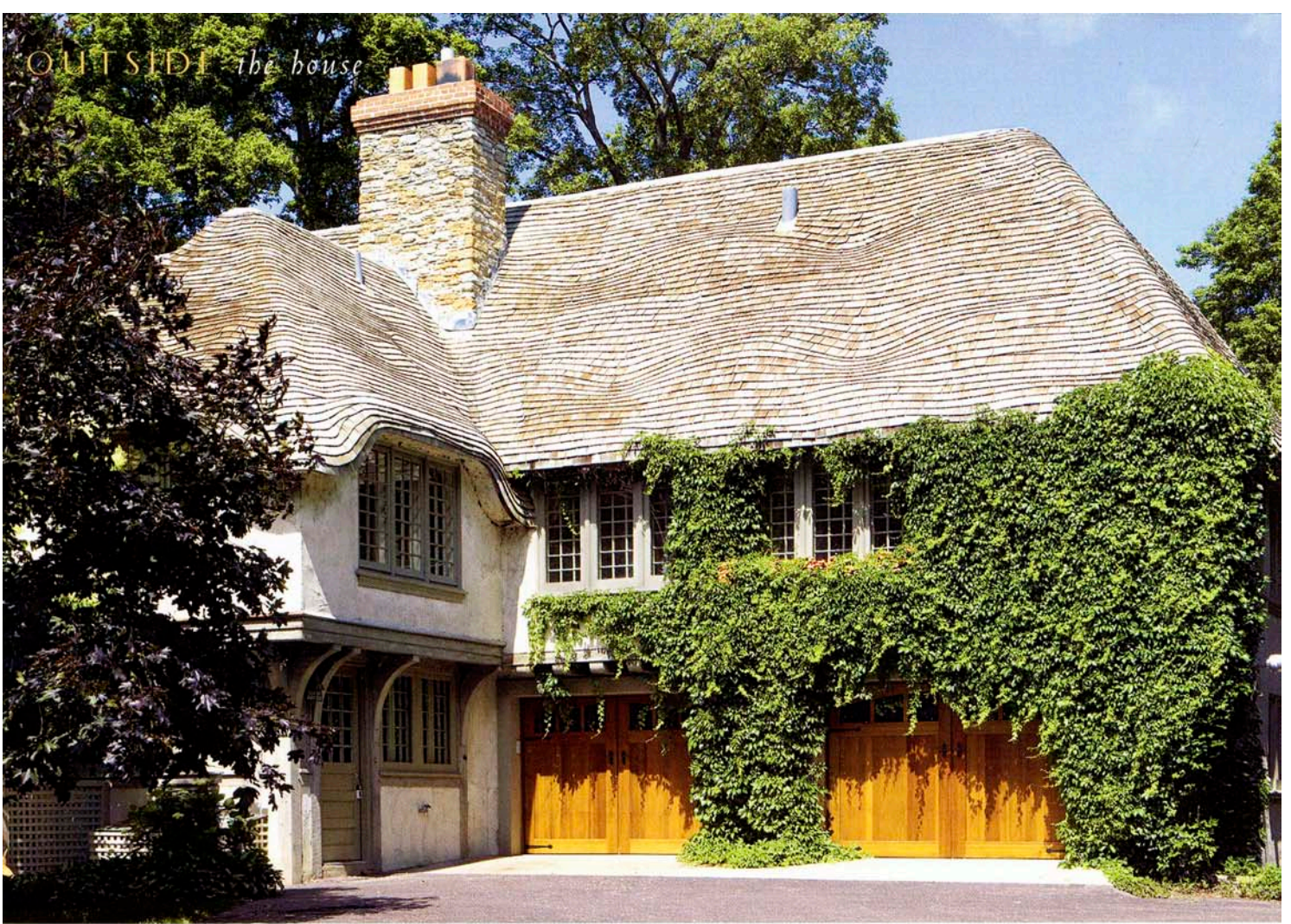
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Exhortations to keep it simple and utilitarian have gone unheeded. If you're going to build a new garage, make the most of it.

## The Right Garage

BY PATRICIA POORE

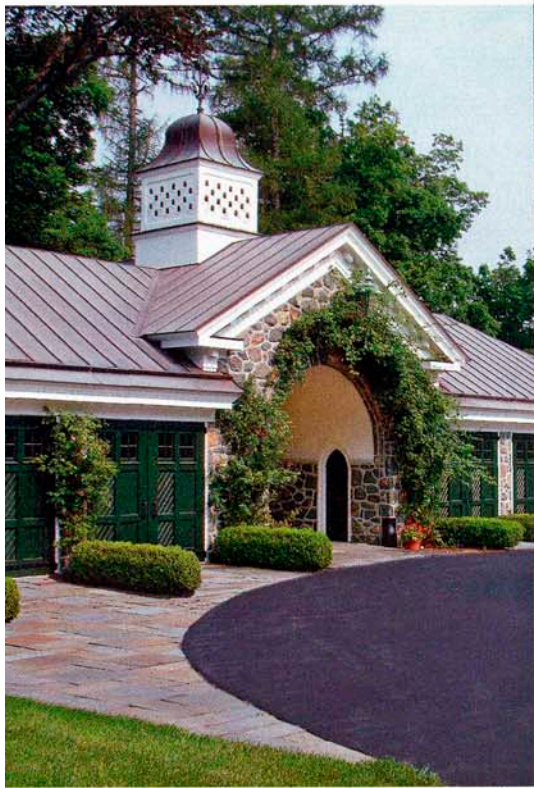
**L**IKE EARLY electric lighting, most early garages were plain. Having electricity, or an automobile, was status enough. Today the garage is expected to do more, from storing big toys for four seasons to acting as workshop or plant room or home office. We first called attention to the garage as major edifice in a 2002 article by Dan Cooper, to which he gave the tongue-in-cheek headline "Garaj Mahal." The trend hasn't abated. With the cost of new construction, you'll want to make the most of the garage, and it makes

sense to hire an architect for your project: you don't want to end up with "a garage with house attached."

**HISTORY** The garage was at first a utilitarian building separate from the house. By the 1920s, the garage was increasingly tied to the house proper by a loggia, pergola, or breezeway. A low wall between house and garage formed a courtyard (or, at least, a laundry yard). The "walled compound" look was particularly popular for English and French Revival houses. The garage was [continued on page 44]

**TOP:** You call this a garage? Carriage doors are unobtrusive beneath brackets, "thatched" roof, and vines. Garage doors are IDC's 7 Series. **ABOVE LEFT:** A garage addition features fire-code doors of classic design: from Garaga Inc., Eastman Series.

**RIGHT:** A muscular period-style addition designed by architecture firm Greene & Proppe. Everything works: the breakup of the massing into a two-storey building plus wing, the cabinet-quality doors, subtly arched lintels, and such Shingle-styling as the Palladian window. **BELOW:** A six-bay carriage house built for antique autos acts as a road screen, creating a courtyard. With a standing-seam metal roof, it was designed by architects Archer & Buchanan. The doors were made by Shiel and Sharp. The Gothic arch door in the entry came from a small chapel in England. Shiel and Sharp matched it for the opposite side of the archway. **OPPOSITE:** Authentic hardware is available from firms such as Kayne & Son Custom Hardware, Inc. [customforgedhardware.com].

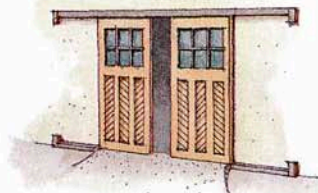


## GARAGE DOORS *are the key*

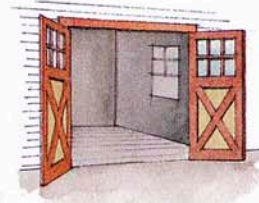
The plainest garage looks compatible if the doors are right. What makes them all wrong? Think mid-century, two-bay overhead-door styling, not in wood, with windows that don't match the house or the period, and a white or high-contrast paint job. ■ Wood requires maintenance, but offers the most options new and will age gracefully and credibly. Metal, MDF, and fiberglass doors are available now, too, in various styles. Circumstances and fire codes may suggest good reasons to use a wood alternative. ■ Consider using raised panels for Colonial Revival compatibility, and long, narrow panels in Craftsman or English Revival architecture. Many period garages had doors with cross-braced panels, similar to barn doors. Tongue-and-groove boarding (beadboard, matchboard) was popular for door panels, too, used vertically or on the diagonal.

## DOOR DESIGN OPTIONS

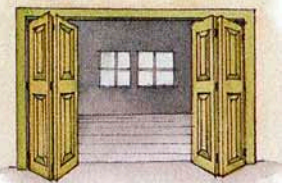
*Even the two-bay sectional overhead door operated by remote can be made to look like multiple doors, or like doors that swing or slide.*



**SLIDING (1910–1929)**  
A sliding door with diagonally laid matchboard panels looks and works like a barn door.



**SWINGING (1910–1940)**  
The real thing, cross braced. Overhead door manufacturers emulate the look without the problems.



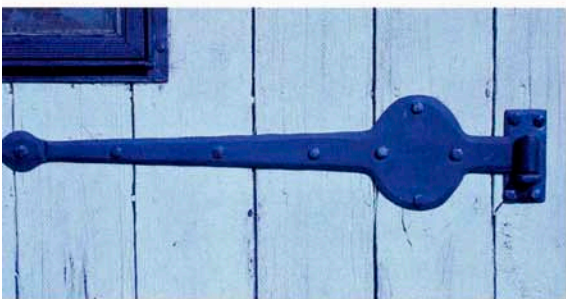
**FOLDING (1915–1929)**  
Bifold or accordion doors date to the Teens and Twenties. Doors slid on tracks, today go overhead.

True swinging doors aren't practical—"never more apparent than on the morning after eighteen inches of snow has fallen," warns design writer and homeowner Dan Cooper.

attached to the house after fear of fire subsided. Garages in 20th-century Colonial Revival house emulated the connected buildings of New England farmhouses. On more formal Georgian Revivals, a garage as one wing balanced a porch-on-slab or sunporch on the other side. Soon garages were tucked under the house or hidden in irregular massing, as in Tudor homes. Not until the postwar split-level did double doors boldly appear on the primary façade.

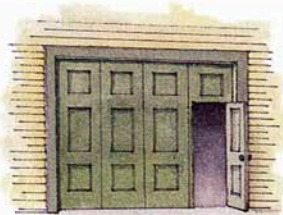
Victorian houses may have had a carriage house later converted to garage space. That's a common sce-

Fancy garages are not new; they were built all along for wealthy. By the Twenties and certainly the Thirties, even suburban owners could choose from matching garage designs: Mediterranean, French, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial, or English. Craftsman-influenced styles were easy to adapt to garages, with their wood shingles, "honest" framework, lattice or pergola. A Japanese look was not uncommon. "Spanish" garages had tiled roofs. Garages have always had windows for ventilation and light, often mimicking those of the house.



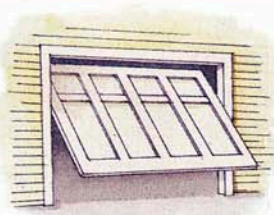
nario used by today's designers for adding a garage to 19th-century houses. Bungalows often had a garage from the beginning; builders' catalogs from as early as 1909 include garages with new homes.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES** First of all, if you have an old garage that's usable, even if doesn't match the house, consider paint color and trellising to make it attractive. You'll see garage doors painted to match the trim color. But painting an ugly or too-big door the body color will help hide it. (New premium doors made of hardwood are sometimes varnished for the natural-wood look, adding furniture quality to the doors. It's not a particularly historical look—old doors, like trim, were



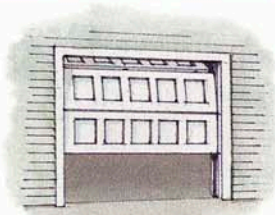
**WITH WICKET DOOR  
(1915–1929)**

That person-sized door hinged into the garage door was typically called a wicket. It's still a good idea.



**TILTING (1935–1949)**

A mid-century variant of the overhead door; today rolling overhead doors can be made to look like these paneled ones.



**SECTIONAL OVERHEAD  
(1920–present)**

The only really practical option for constant use, the sectional overhead or "roll-up" door is standard.

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**RIGHT:** A polychromed Victorian house has a detached garage and painted custom bifold doors by Designer Doors.

**BELOW:** The integrated garage hidden on the side, further softened by pergola ornament over the doors. Design by The Bungalow Company.



## SOURCES

Contributing architects: **ARCHER & BUCHANAN ARCHITECTURE, LTD.**, West Chester, PA: archerbuchanan.com, (610) 692-9112 ■ **THE BUNGALOW COMPANY**, Bend, OR: thebungalowcompany.com, (888) 945-9206 ■ **GREENE & PROPPE DESIGN**, Chicago: gpdchicago.com, (773) 271-1925 ■ **SALA ARCHITECTS**, Minneapolis, MN: salaarc.com, (612) 379-3037

Companies that specialize in practical yet period-appropriate garage doors; **AMARR GARAGE DOORS**, Winston-Salem, NC: amarr.com, (800) 503-DOOR ■ **CARRIAGE HOUSE DOOR CO.**, Sacramento, CA: carriagedoor.com, (866) 890-1776 ■ **DESIGNER DOORS**, River Falls, WI: designerdoors.com, (800) 241-0525 ■ **EVERGREEN CARRIAGE DOORS**, Olalla, WA: evergreencarriagedoors.com, (800) 654-0750 ■ **GARAGA INC.**, St. Georges, Quebec: garaga.com, (800) 464-2724 ■ **GENERAL AMERICAN DOOR CO. [GADCO]**, Montgomery, IL: gadco.com, (630) 859-3000 ■ **HAHN'S WOODWORKING CO.**, Branchburg, NJ: hahnswoodworking.com, (908) 783-1415 ■ **INDUSTRIAL DOOR COMPANY, INC. [IDC]**, Minneapolis, MN: idcdoors.com, (888) 798-0199 ■ **JELD-WEN [Carriage House and Estate Series]**: jeld-wen.com, (800) 877-9482 ■ **MAINE GARAGE DOOR**, York, ME: (866) 379-4265, mainedoors.com ■ **MAURER & SHEPHERD JOYNER**s, Glastonbury, CT: (860) 633-2383 ■ **RAYNOR GARAGE DOOR**, Dixon, IL: raynor.com, (815) 288-1431 ■ **REAL CARRIAGE DOOR COMPANY**, Gig Harbor WA: realcarriagedoors.com, (866) 883-8021 ■ **SECTIONS**, Burnsville, MN: sections.com, (877) 707-8810 ■ **SUMMIT DOOR**, Corona, CA: summitdoorinc.com, (888) 768-3667

coated with oil paint—but it's a nice touch in today's revival-house garages.) Do paint attractive doors in the trim color, perhaps with panels reversed to body color (or a shade of the trim color).

If you are building a new garage, decide whether you prefer the simple, utilitarian garaging space, or the garage that matches the house. Will it be at the back of the lot, semi-detached, attached, or integrated into the house? If fitting-in matters to you, walk or bicycle around town, peering down alleys and side streets. Note materials, garages' relation to their lots and houses, roof types, door styles, and details. Garages that mimicked the design of the house were not as common as utilitarian structures, but

they are the ones that have tended to survive the decades. Remember that the new building will be close to the old, so match the basics and even try to incorporate some salvaged windows, millwork, or ornament.

An architect may be able to integrate car parking into the building, as a modest rear extension, or under it in space excavated from the base-

ment or patio. A designer understands that the garage has to be subservient to the main building, by means of lower height, a setback, or locating it at the rear or side of the house.

However plain or fancy, the garage will be judged by its doors. If they are out of proportion, obviously modern, and clunky rather than stylish, the garage will look wrong. ✦