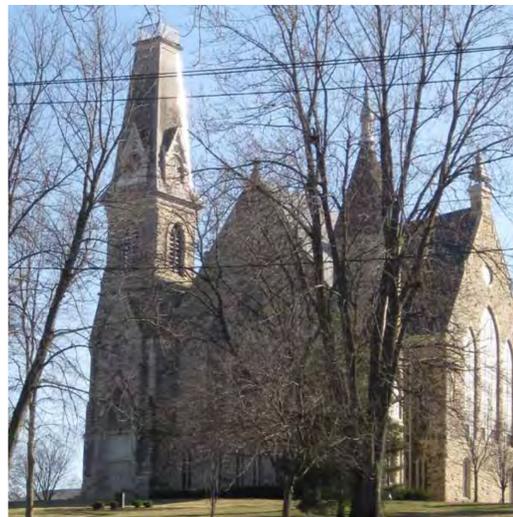




“The two best things we have in Mount Vernon are architecture and trees. I love trees. You [have to] have trees!”



“I love King Chapel because you can see it from all corners of the town.”

Architectural Heritage

An iconic photo often used to describe Mount Vernon depicts a row of nicely maintained Victorian homes on a street lined with large shade trees. Each home features a matching Victorian porch, many of which are flying an American flag.

This nostalgic image is a reality in Mount Vernon repeated over and over in variations throughout the neighborhoods. Workshop participants agreed that they are constantly discovering new architectural delights to enjoy on their daily walks.

As one resident pointed out, when one approaches town on Mount Vernon Road, and begins to make out some architectural and landscape details on the horizon, it soon becomes apparent it is a special place. Crossing the railroad bridge and climbing the hill toward Cornell College, King's Chapel dominates the view. At 1st Street and the college one is literally surrounded by rich historic architecture. The entire Cornell College campus is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Residents at the workshop agreed that it was not only the strong architectural influence that made Mount Vernon a beautiful place to live, but also the abundance of large street trees, in combination with the architecture, that is so powerful. Another neighborhood in the northeast corner of town is designated an historic district, known as the Ash Park Historic Neighborhood. Throughout town are many small private gardens for the residents to enjoy as well.

In addition to King's Chapel, other notable architectural examples include the Presbyterian and Methodist churches. All three of these buildings are constructed from limestone that was mined locally from a quarry now converted into a popular community park known as Nature Park.

It's not just the residential and college architecture that the community embraces, but the character of the uptown buildings as well. Much of the original storefront details remain, enough to have been designated one of three historic districts in town.

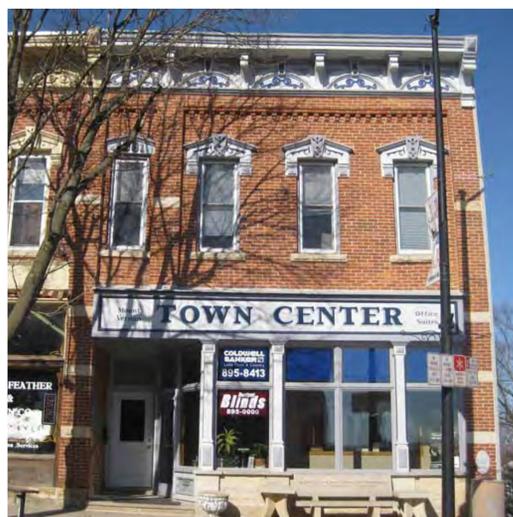
Residents feel strongly about their architectural heritage and are working to protect and enhance it. Mount Vernon has recently become a Main Street Iowa community.



“Coming into Mount Vernon from Cedar Rapids you see the scenic beauty of the countryside and then the architectural beauty and you know this place is special.”



“I love the architecture of the pre-1900's homes with the big porches and wood siding.”



Architectural Heritage

Mount Vernon, Iowa

Landscape Architect: Craig Ritland, FASLA, Craig Ritland Landscape Architects

Iowa Department of Transportation Trees Forever ISU Landscape Architecture Extension ISU Extension Community and Economic Development

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