

Late Georgian Style (1750–90)

The style called **Late Georgian** came to America in English pattern books. These contained drawings of houses, floor plans, and details that could be built with little or no architectural training. One of the most significant of these books was James Gibbs's *A Book of Architecture* (1728), which had reached America by 1751 at the latest. His designs had great appeal for Americans because they were conservative in scale and within their means. Also, unlike his contemporaries, Gibbs showed a strong tendency to maintain much of the richness of the Wren-Baroque design, which was suited to American taste. Gibbs's book contained illustrations of homes designed with a central house or block, connected to symmetrical dependencies (outbuildings) by straight or curved passages or wings. Such dependencies created a forecourt in the Palladian manner. Gibbs also designed houses in the Wren-Baroque style—as simple self-contained rectangular houses without wings or dependencies. His designs include the use of rusticated stone, balustrades, quoins, and pilasters, details too ornate for use by other Palladian architects of his time. Gibbs often designed houses with a two-story projecting pavilion or **breakfront**.

The breakfront topped with a triangular pediment above the roofline is the most distinctive feature of the Late Georgian-style house. In most other respects, it is similar to the Early Georgian style—a rectangular box with five or more bays, hipped roof, and tall end chimneys. The hipped roof is often lower-pitched than the Early Georgian roof and may, in rare cases, feature a balustrade or **parapet** (solid railing-height wall) at the eaves

that hides the roof. The Late Georgian house may have a portico or a bracketed cornice, as well as pilasters and pediments at the doorway. The door may be crowned with a roundheaded **fanlight** (a rounded, over-the-door window), and the windows in the dormers may also be roundheaded. These houses may also feature a round-headed arched window with lower rectangular windows on each side called a **Palladian window**. (They bear that name because they resemble an architectural detail used by Palladio on several of his designs.) When placed above a front door or at the end of an important room, they create an impressive focal point. The standard windows on the Late Georgian house are frequently capped with **crown**, or **jack arch lintels**, which are trapezoid-shaped stone pieces with a wedge-shaped keystone. Corner trim is plain or quoined, and sometimes this style features two-story pilasters.

Late Georgian Furniture Classics

In the late Georgian period the Chippendale furniture style was popular. This style, like the Queen Anne style, remains a favorite today.

Chippendale furniture was designed during the mid-eighteenth century by Englishman **Thomas Chippendale** (1718–99). His book of designs, *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* (1754), featured 160 plates with drawings of furniture pieces. Because the designs were published in book form, any skilled woodworker could build or adapt them, and as a result, their popularity soon spread throughout the British Isles and America. Chippendale's drawings showed the influence of French (Louis XV), Chinese, Gothic, and Neoclassic designs. The

Chippendale chair is characterized by its upholstered seat, cabriole legs with claw and ball feet, and a yoke-shaped back with an ornately carved splat. The backs might be carved in the form of ribbons, in Gothic tracery, in Chinese fretwork, or into pierced slats forming a ladder-back. The Chippendale cabriole legs joined the apron in the same manner as the Queen Anne cabriole legs. On some pieces a straight square leg known as the **Marlborough leg** was common.

The Chippendale wing chair is similar to the Queen Anne wing chair, but generally has either Marlborough legs or cabriole legs with claw and ball feet and is larger scaled.

The Chippendale **camel-back sofa** is an upholstered piece with a **serpentine-shaped back** that dips and rises from rolled arms to a hump in the center. The sofa has either cabriole legs with claw and ball feet or Marlborough legs with or without stretchers.

The **block front** is a furniture detail associated with John Goddard (1724–85) of Newport, Rhode Island. The block front, which was applied to



Figure 15.13 This lovely Late Georgian room features furniture in the style of Thomas Chippendale. Courtesy of Winterthur/Photo Gavin Ashworth

Chippendale-style case pieces, consists of a front panel divided into three alternating vertical convex and concave sections. The inside section is concave, the two outside sections are convex, and the top of each section is finished with a carved convex or concave shell.

The Chippendale breakfront is a case piece designed in such a way that the front plane of the piece is broken (its part advancing and part receding). The breakfront was commonly built as a secretary or a china cupboard and had an enclosed cabinet below and open shelves with glass doors above. The breakfront was also popular in succeeding periods and appears in several styles.

The Chippendale highboy, like the Queen Anne highboy, consists of a low, two-drawer chest on legs (lowboy) with an additional chest of drawers above. The chest is

topped by a scroll pediment with a finial. In the eighteenth century, Philadelphia was an important center for furniture manufacture. The Philadelphia highboy, with its magnificent carving, is a particularly beautiful example of the American version of the Chippendale style. Table 15.9 contains examples of Late Georgian design.

Late Georgian Color

Late Georgian colors were peach, ivory, Wedgwood blue, opal pink, and green with clean and creamy white backgrounds of English garden-printed fabrics. More intense colors such as reds, golds, and deep greens and blues were still often seen in rich imported textiles such as silks, fine cottons, linens, and in the increasingly popular Oriental rugs.

Table 15.9 Late Georgian Design and Chippendale Furniture

Exterior Characteristics

- Same basic form as the Early Georgian house
- Two-story projecting pavilion or breakfront with pediment
- Small portico over doorway (optional)
- Two-story double portico (optional)
- Bulkings massed into symmetrical blocks and connections; Palladian massing (optional)
- Doorways with roundheaded fanlights, bracketed cornices, or pilasters and pediments (optional)
- Corners untrimmed or trimmed with quoins or pilasters (optional)
- Crown lintels (optional)

Influences

- James Gibbs and other English Palladian architects
- English pattern books

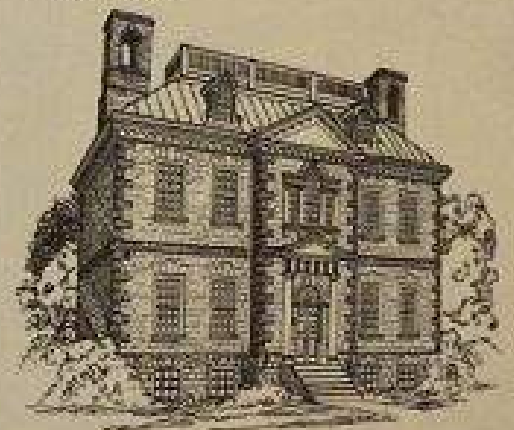
Residential Examples

- Tyrone Palace (1770), New Bern, North Carolina
- Mount Pleasant (1761), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Longfellow House (1750), Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Mount Airy (1758–62), Richmond County, Virginia
- Lady Pepperell House (1760), Kittery Point, Maine
- Miles-Brewton House (1765–69), Charleston, South Carolina
- Bardon (1765–70), Prince George County, Virginia
- Hammond-Harwood House (1773–74), Annapolis, Maryland

Contract Examples

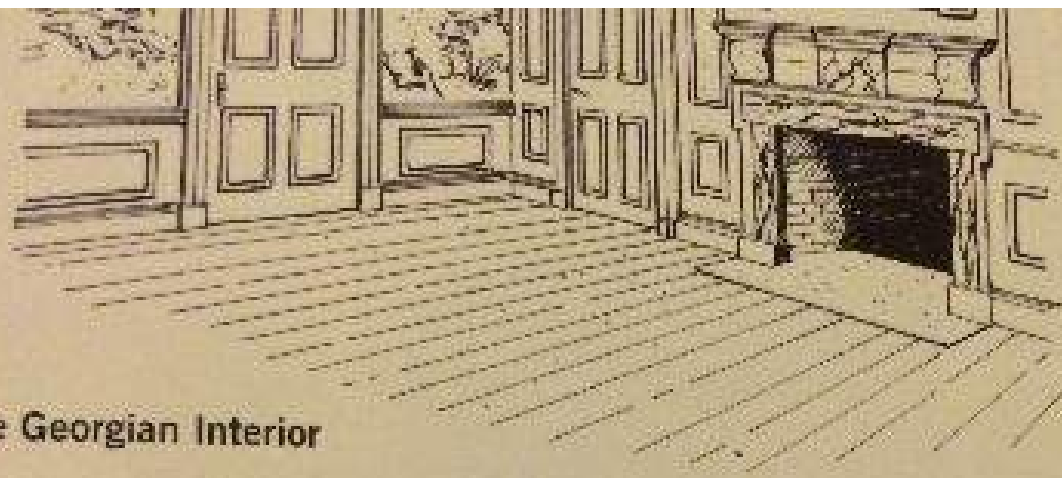
- St. Michael's Church (1752–61), Charleston, South Carolina
- First Baptist Meetinghouse (1774–75), Providence, Rhode Island
- Redwood Library (1758–80), Newport, Rhode Island
- Brick Market (1761–62), Newport, Rhode Island

Mount Pleasant



Tyrone Palace





Chippendale Philadelphia Highway

Late Georgian Interior

Interior Details

Floors. Wooden plank

Walls. Large raised wooden panels, painted; also, dado with wallpaper above

Windows. Sash

Doors. Paneled, moldings with ears (molding breaks to form squares at corners)

Chimneypiece. Flush, with molding forming ears, and often with cornice and frieze; cornice forms mantel, over mantel with ears

Ceiling. Flat, plain, or decorated with anaglypta (raised patterns)

Stairs. Wooden U-turn, turned balusters

Textile Description

Colors. Baroque and Rococo influence, more vivid colors—red, gold, blue, turquoise or teal, and rich coral sometimes lightened to soft peach

Patterns. Renaissance patterns still in use and strong influence of Chinese and Rococo motifs; English garden block-printed patterns

Textures. Smooth silklike textures in damask and brocade, printed cotton fabrics from slightly coarse to very refined, some velvets