



Broad eaves and multiple gables are appealing features; the 2001 second-storey rear addition is just visible.

ARTS &  
CRAFTS  
HOMES  
AND THE REVIVAL

# All You Need to Know About the Bungalow

The bungalow as a house form has close ties to the Arts & Crafts movement. Let's explore what makes the bungalow a favorite among Arts & Crafts Homes readers and tour a few beautiful examples while we're at it.

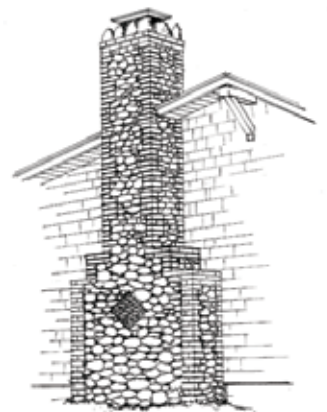
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HOUSE STYLES:

# The Craftsman Bungalow

**T**HE WORD “BUNGALOW” may seem today like a synonym for “cottage,” but in its heyday it was prized both for its exotic, Anglo-Indian associations and for its artistic naturalism. Early in the 20th century, the bungalow had close ties to the Arts & Crafts movement. That affinity has been even stronger in recent years, as thousands of bungalows were snatched up to be interpreted in a manner often beyond the tastes and budgets of the original owners. • The bungalow showed up in the U.S. in the 1880s, but it was its development in Southern California that paved the way for its new role as a year-round house. *by Patricia Poore*

1890–1930

An “artistic bungalow” (modeled on an actual planbook model).

Ground-hugging, the bungalow provides cozy shelter; a pergola porch blends indoors and out. Exaggerated structure—brackets, battered piers, and belt courses—is the only ornamentation.



## THE HALLMARKS

- **one or one and a half stories** Larger houses may have a bungalow-era look, but the definition of a bungalow is one story, albeit often with a half-story above.
- **low, ground-hugging** Most bungalows are low and spreading—with porches, sun porches, pergolas, and patios tying them to the outdoors.

- **indigenous materials** An artistic use of river rock, clinker brick, quarried stone, shingles, and stucco is common.
- **emphasis on structure** Look for exaggeration in columns, eaves brackets, and rafters. Inside, find ceiling beams, chunky window trim, and wide paneled doors.

- **artistic naturalism** The Arts & Crafts bungalow follows an informal aesthetic; it is a type without strong allusions to formal European or classical precedents.
- **exotic influences** Appearing in builders’ houses as well as in books and magazines: stick ornament in the manner of Swiss Chalets; Spanish or Moorish arches and tilework; and orientalism, especially Japanesque.



Bungalows came from India, sort of—variations of the word existed for hundreds of years before any bungalows showed up in England or the U.S. “Bunguloues,” temporary and quickly erected shelters, were houses for Englishmen built by native labor in India: long, low buildings with wide verandas and deeply overhanging eaves. Around 1870, builders of newly fashionable English seacoast vacation houses referred to them as “bungalows,” giving them an exotic, rough-and-ready image.

But it was in California that the bungalow boom began. The climate was perfect for a rambling “natural” house with porches and patios. Los Angeles and upscale Pasadena, a resort town in the 1890s, were growing fast. An essential part of mass suburbanization was “an innovative, small, single-family, simple but artistic dwelling; inexpensive, easily built, yet at the same time attractive to the new middle-class buyer.” The California bungalow (a term used by 1905) was soon a well-defined new style. Architects Greene and Greene in California called their millionaires’ chalets “bungalows.” Gustav Stickley sang their praises in his magazine *The Craftsman*. Dozens of plan books between 1909 and 1925 promoted “artistic bungalows.”

Home ownership was becoming



**TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Semi-bungalow with shed dormer and vernacular river-rock accents. A 1901 Seattle bungalow with aspects of the Victorian Shingle Style. The cross-gabled bungalow in California has it all: knee braces, triple windows, sawn rafter tails, battered posts on piers.

**ABOVE:** Art, craftsmanship, and nature: the quintessential Arts & Crafts vignette in a bungalow.

a realizable American dream for an exploding middle class. A need existed for small and simple house that would look good even if plainly built and furnished.

As early as 1908, the word with cachet was being used for small houses that had only the vaguest bungalow allusions. Ironically, the 1920s was the boom period for bungalow building even as its decline began. Instead of “simple, rustic, natural, charming,” the

glut was beginning to change the connotation of the word to “cheap, small, and vulgar.”

After World War II, the word was revived to mean a vacation shack by the seashore or lake—not so far from its first use in England in the 19th century. Since the 1980s, the American bungalow has come back stronger than ever as part of the Arts & Crafts Revival.



**ABOVE:** The offset double gable front is one bungalow type. A stout little picket fence is perfectly complementary in its height and details.

## bungalow INTERIORS

THE TYPICAL bungalow interior, at least as it was presented in the house books of the period, is easy to recognize. Basically, the bungalow interior was a Craftsman interior.

In a departure from Victorian decoration, bungalow writers frowned on the display of wealth. Rather than buying objects of obvious or ascribed value, the home-owner was told to look for simplicity and craftsmanship. The finest examples of Arts & Crafts handiwork found a place in the bungalow—but so did rustic furniture.

Walls were often wood-paneled to chair-rail or plate-rail height. Burlap in soft earth tones was suggested for the wall area above, or used between

wainscot battens. Landscape friezes and abstract stenciling above a plate rail were pictured. Dulled, grayed shades and earth tones, even pastels, were preferred to strong colors. Plaster with sand in the finish coat was suggested. Woodwork could be golden oak or oak brown-stained to simulate old English woodwork, or stained dull black or bronze green. Painted softwood was also becoming popular, especially for bedrooms, with white enamel common before 1910 and stronger color gaining popularity during the '20s.

### BOOKS RECOMMENDED

You'll find so many books about the American Arts & Crafts movement and bungalows! For the editor's list of favorites, go to [artsandcraftshomes.com/books](http://artsandcraftshomes.com/books)



## STYLE variants

Period bungalows can be quite plain little houses. Some nod to other styles, including English Tudor, Swiss Chalet, Prairie School—anachronistically, even Colonial.



ENGLISH bungalow



CHICAGO bungalow



PRAIRIE bungalow



CHALET bungalow



SPANISH bungalow



**TOP LEFT:** Simpatico furnishings in a 1915 bungalow in rural New York complement the intact colonnade and trim. **TOP RIGHT:** Some owners prefer a lighter approach, especially in bedrooms and when the house has elements of the Colonial Revival. **ABOVE:** The brick-tile fireplace, integrated bookcases, “honest” trim, and beams are typical. **LEFT:** The Gamble House by architects Greene & Greene is one of their “ultimate bungalows.”

It became almost an obsession with bungalow builders to see how many amenities could be crammed into the least amount of space. By 1920, the bungalow had more space-saving built-ins than a yacht: Murphy wall beds, ironing boards in cupboards, built-in mailboxes, telephone nooks.

Oak woodwork demanded oak furniture, supplemented with reed, rattan, wicker, or willow. Mahogany pieces were thought best against a backdrop of woodwork painted off-white. A large table with a reading lamp was the centerpiece of the living room in the days before TV.

Clutter was out—“clutter” being a relative term. Pottery, Indian baskets, oriental wares, vases, and Arts & Crafts hangings satisfied the collector instinct. More affluent households might display Rookwood pottery, small Tiffany pieces, hammered copper bowls, and items from Liberty and Co. A watercolor landscape or two, executed by the amateur painter of the family, was the ultimate Arts & Crafts expression for the home. ■

