

San Antonio Architectural Design Elements

Thinking like an aesthetic who
considers form and function!

Facade



- This is the face of a building and usually faces the front.
- Incorporates design elements such as an impressive entrance, finials or windows

Bay Window



- These windows project out from walls
- They may be semicircular, rectangular, or polygonal in shape
- Frequently used in Gothic and Victorian designs

Oriel Window



- Projecting window on an upper floor with multiple panes of glass
- Oriel windows were intended as an area for private prayer or reflection

Rose Window



- Very fancy and decorative circular windows with tracery radiating from the center
- Usually found above the west door of a church

Cartouche



- Decorative ornament from late Renaissance or Baroque era
- Word means “paper scroll”
- Frequently bears name of building’s patron or the year a structure was completed

Roman Arch



- This style of arch is curved at the top and may be a structural opening or freestanding
- Arranged so mutual pressure supports each stone, a Keystone is at the very top center

Gothic Arch



- This arch is pointed at the top and may be a structural opening or freestanding
- Arranged so mutual pressure supports each stone in place

Balustrade



- Found on balconies or the second level of a structure
- May also be a railing system for a staircase
- Composed of balusters and a top rail

Parapet



- Originally used as a wall to protect military ramparts and castles
- Low railing along perimeter of a roof, balcony or a bridge

Gable



- Triangular end of a roof or dormer, may be above the attic or a bedroom
- May have a steep or gentle slope

Turret



- Small tower projecting from the wall of a building, frequently seen on ancient castles at the corner of walls
- May be ornamental or defensible

Cupola



- Frequently mistaken for a dome due to shape, these are smaller than a dome and decorative
- Domed or curved roof rising from a building

Finial



- Originally a stone carving at the top of a buttress to add strength
- Now any ornament added to the top of a gable, pinnacle, canopy, or spire to add an aesthetic quality