

Introduction

We decided to do our project on 10 historic buildings in Bellingham/Fairhaven, with each of us working on 2 buildings of our choosing. The goal was for us to research our buildings and then compare/contrast them together to form an idea of what architectural styles and cultural ideas were brought to Bellingham at its birth.

Research Question & Background

For our group's research question, we were interested in finding what cultures and architectural styles influenced Bellingham and Fairhaven's architecture over time.

We were mainly interested in early influences. Using academic books and some websites we created lists of buildings we investigated as data points. We each took two and researched each building, making sure to note when they were built, their architectural style, and their history. Our hypothesis is that most of downtown Bellingham and Fairhaven historic districts were built under the American colonialism style and culture, with little influence from the local native population.

Methods

Materials & Location

Our group used the library at Whatcom Community College to find books on local history and gathered information about architectural styles used in Bellingham during the formation of the cities. We also used online local resources for information and history gathering of building archetypes. The group would either visit the buildings in person or use online resources that were available. Collected data from various websites about the buildings and we chose to identify Bellingham buildings.

Procedure

During our research times, we would look through books at the Whatcom Community College Library, research online, watch video presentations, and visit some buildings in person. Online resources had the most information available about these buildings and Bellingham's history and culture. When finding out the most pertinent information it came from an online resource. The books were not as informative to the question we formed. We gathered information from when the buildings were erected, what materials were used, if possible, cultural influences if any, and what style the architecture was.

Discussion

After gathering and collecting data, we see that the majority of historic buildings in downtown Bellingham and Fairhaven were built with the Roman Revival style in mind, more specifically, Richardson Romanesque. Our hypothesis was that the majority would be American Colonialism, but even though it isn't the vast majority, it's still within the top 3 used styles. All top three styles originated in American culture.

Despite strong Native American heritage in the Bellingham area, none of their influence was accounted for in the construction of Bellingham's buildings. They seem to be very heavily-handedly influenced by the late 1800s and early 1900s American architecture. Many buildings were using sandstone that was found locally, specifically Chuckanut sandstone. This is also true for timber, most of the timber used was from local timber farms, including Bellingham Bay. ("Bellingham -- Thumbnail History")

A shortcoming we ran into was that there were not many sources to gather information from regarding the cultural influences in Bellingham. A lot talked about the architectural styles but very little talked about the actual cultures of people who moved here long ago. Some buildings seem to have a more written history than others.

Our findings have deduced that Bellingham did not put too much emphasis on including different cultures in their archetypes. The most common theme is Richardson Romanesque, an American style of Roman architecture. In the future, we would put more effort into collecting data in person and visiting museums/ local realtors who are knowledgeable about local architecture.

References/Works Cited

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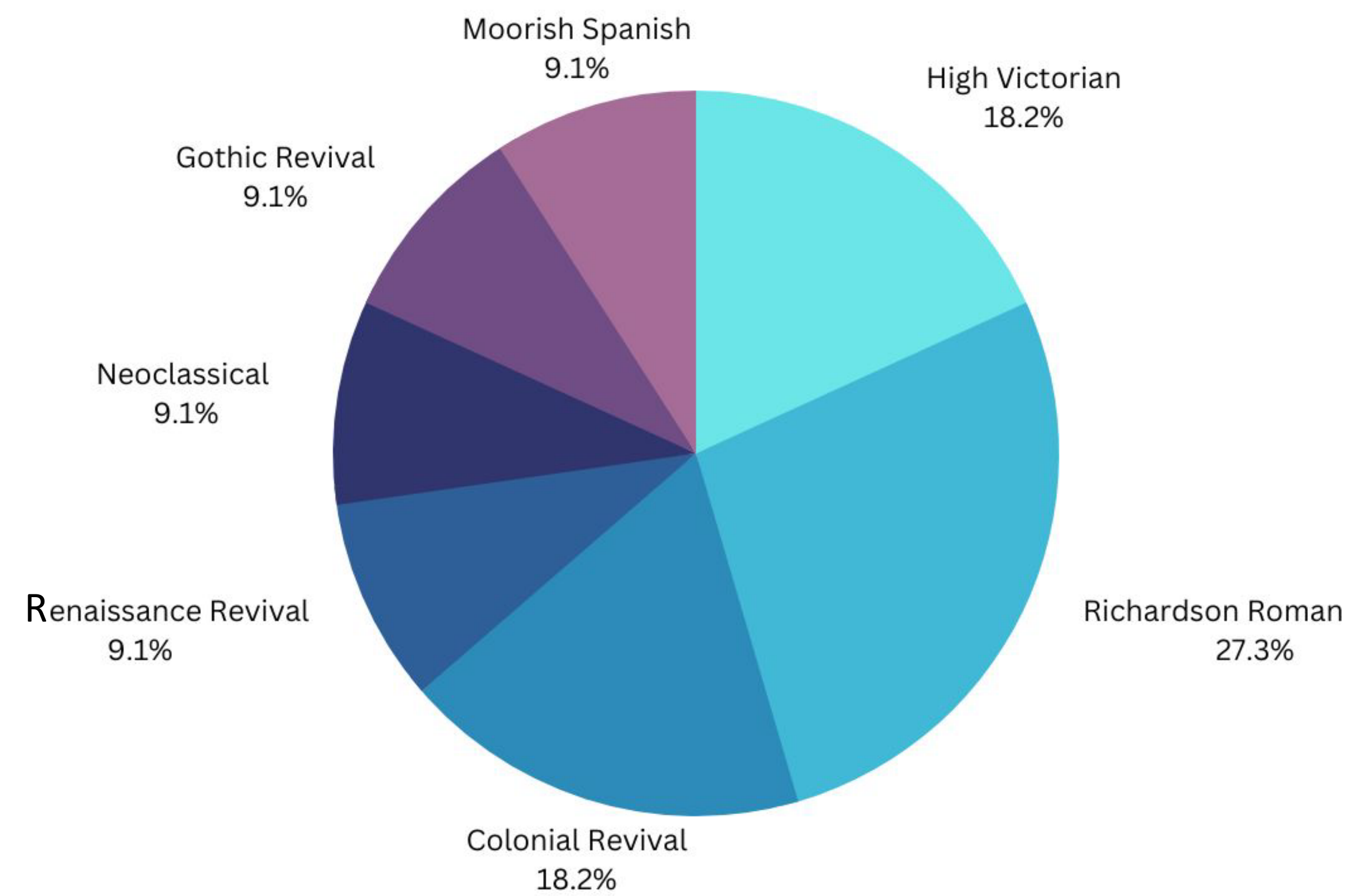


Figure 1 depicts the different styles gathered from the 10 buildings we researched in downtown Bellingham/Fairhaven.

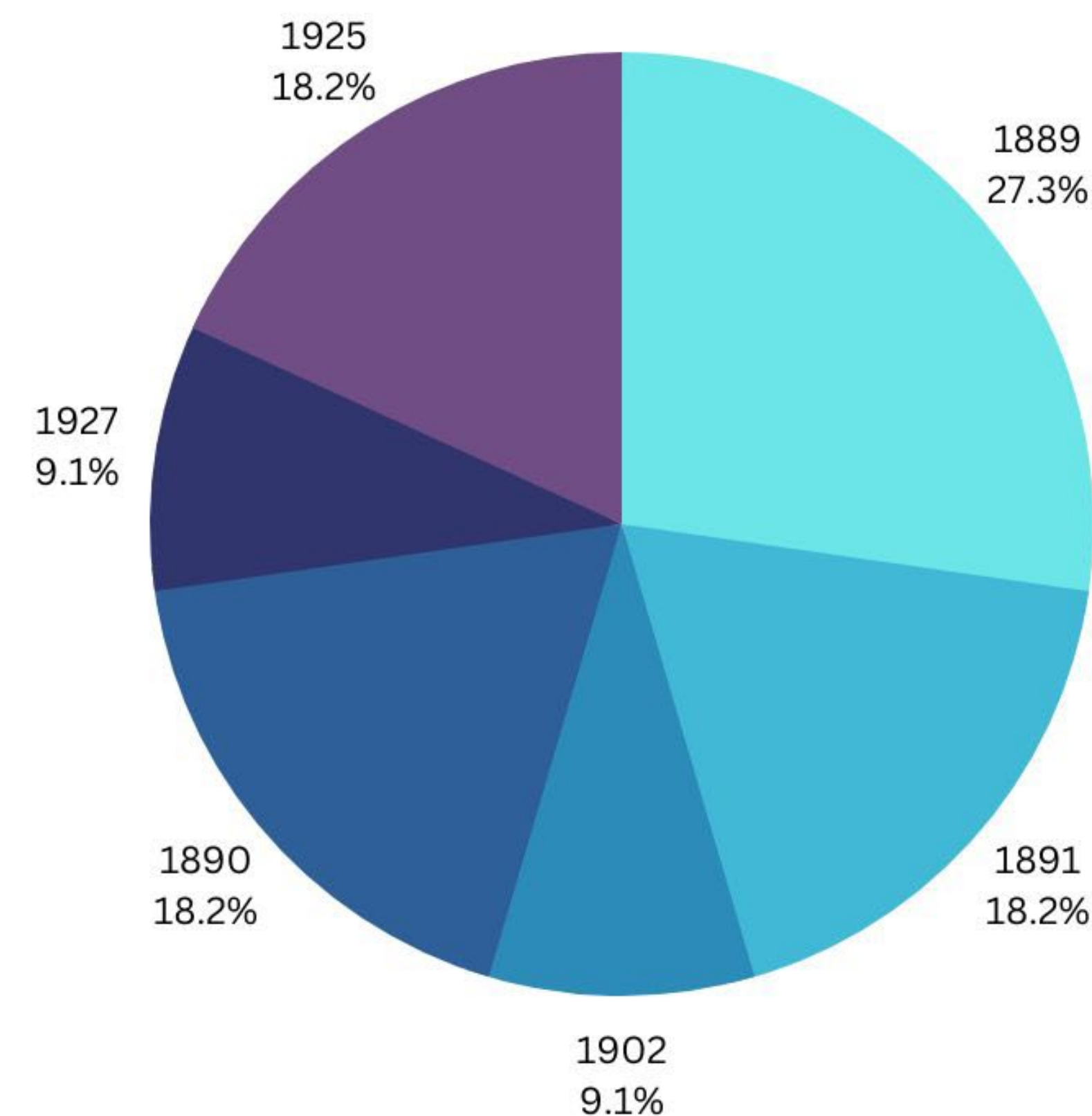


Figure 2 depicts the years the buildings were built in relation to one another.