

LOUISIANA VERNACULAR

The early settlers of Louisiana, arriving by water, brought with them their culture, lifestyle, religions, and methods of building and developed a unique architecture in response to the climate and geography. In general, the houses have the first floor raised above the ground, steeply pitched roofs, tall windows which touch the floor, or French doors, and relatively simple forms that can have added wings and elements.

In this Pattern Book, we call this indigenous style Louisiana Vernacular. Within that general category, there are many variations including Acadian-influenced, Creole-influenced, and Anglicized versions of each. These can be classified by plan type as documented by many scholars including Jay Edwards, Lloyd Vogt, and others. This Pattern Book classifies them by massing, roof form, and the arrangement of elements such as windows and porches.

CREOLE-INFLUENCED building types include cottages, shotguns, camelbacks, large palatial houses, and townhouses, many of which include galleries and accommodate a mix of uses. There are a variety of roof forms including hips, double hips, and gables. Porches are either added or within a double pitch.

ACADIAN-INFLUENCED houses are always side gabled. Most often seen in rural settings, these houses are simple, but beautifully proportioned and carefully built. Building types include cottages, large houses, small buildings, and churches. Steeply pitched gable roofs with porches cut into the volume of the house are the most dominant visual elements.

ANGLICIZED VERSIONS of these building types are more symmetrical, have center or side halls, and have a close relationship between windows and doors.

Illustrations include recently built examples as well as historic ones to illustrate the enduring nature of these traditions.

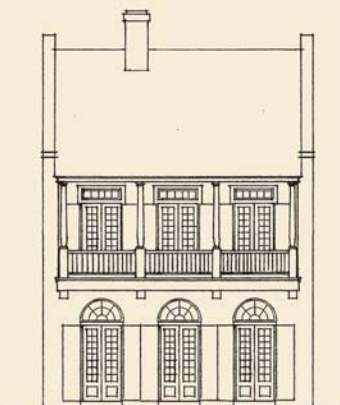
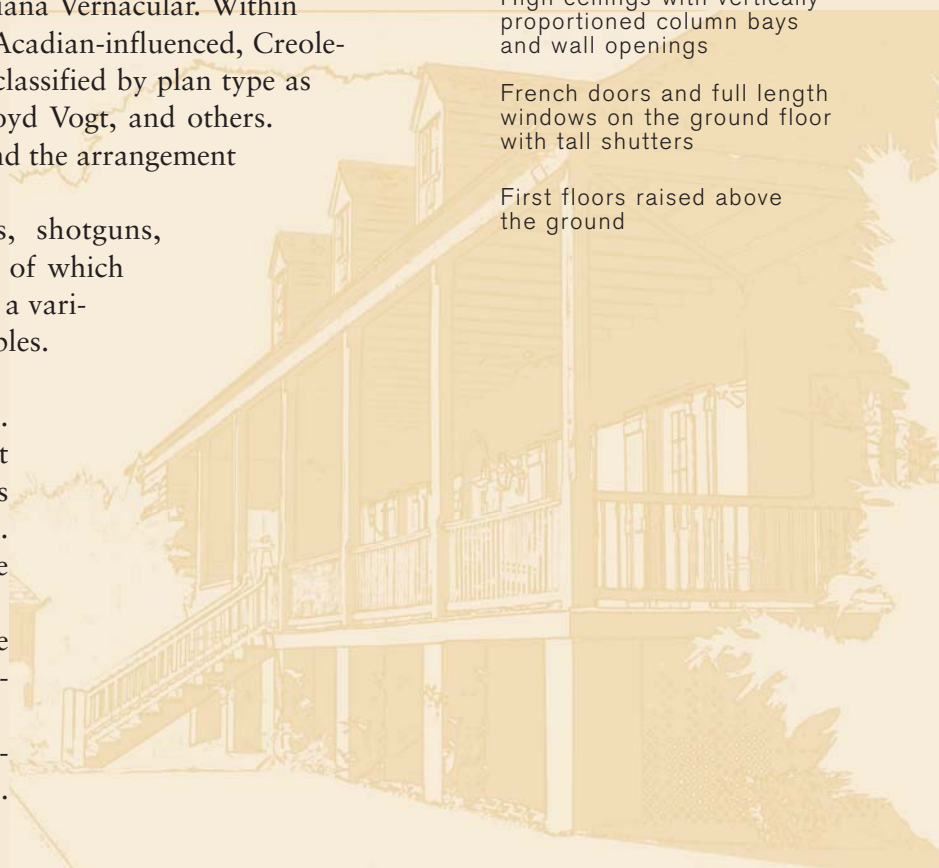
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Deep one- and two-story porches

High ceilings with vertically proportioned column bays and wall openings

French doors and full length windows on the ground floor with tall shutters

First floors raised above the ground



GALLERY OF EXAMPLES

CREOLE-INFLUENCED STYLE



Lafayette



St. Francisville



Lafayette



New Orleans



New Orleans



Baton Rouge



Baton Rouge

ACADIAN-INFLUENCED STYLE



Vermilionville



Baton Rouge



Thibodaux



New Iberia



Baton Rouge

Photo courtesy of Steve Oubre

CREOLE-INFLUENCED MASSING & COMPOSITION

NARROW FRONT

- >> One-story mass
- >> Hip roof with 10 in 12 roof pitch
- >> Ridge line of roof runs perpendicular to entrance facade
- >> Includes shotgun and double-shotgun massing types

ROWHOUSE

- >> One- to one-and-one-half-story mass
- >> One to two sides of the house are party walls
- >> Gable roof with 10 in 12 roof pitch
- >> Ridge line of roof runs parallel to entrance facade

BROAD FRONT

- >> One- to two-story mass
- >> Hip roof with a constant 10 in 12 roof pitch or a double pitch roof of 9 in 12 over the main body and 6 in 12 over the recessed porch
- >> Ridge line of roof runs parallel to entrance facade

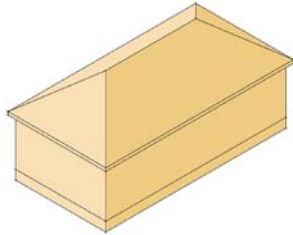
FACADE COMPOSITION

- >> Informal relationship among the elements enables the window spacing, dormer placement, and porch bays to each have their own spacing and dimensions
- >> Entrance doors are typically under porches

MASSING COMBINATIONS

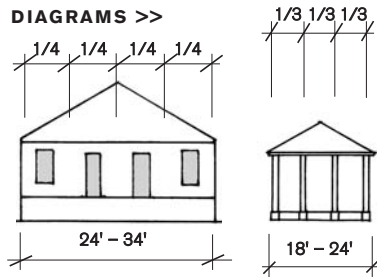
- >> Larger living spaces may be created by combining side and/or rear wings with the main body.
- >> Attached wings should have similar roof pitches and be treated as separate “additions” to the basic form rather than as part of a single complex form.
- >> Gable dormers may be added to introduce light into half-story and attic spaces.
- >> The architectural character of the attached elements should match that of the main body.

NARROW FRONT MASSING

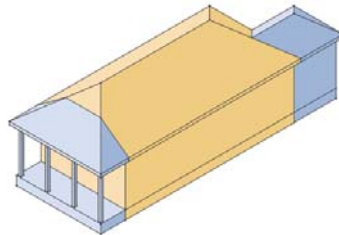


1-story Narrow Front

FACADE COMPOSITION DIAGRAMS >>



POSSIBLE MASSING COMBINATIONS >>

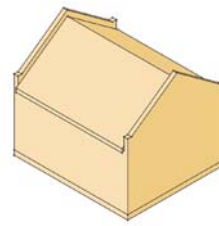


Baton Rouge

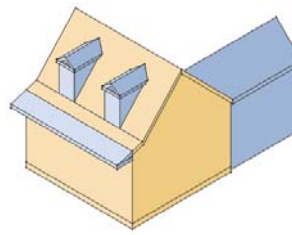
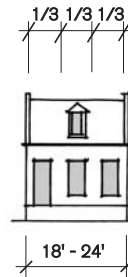


Lake Charles

ROWHOUSE MASSING



1- to 1½-story Rowhouse

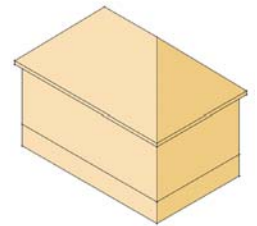


Lafayette

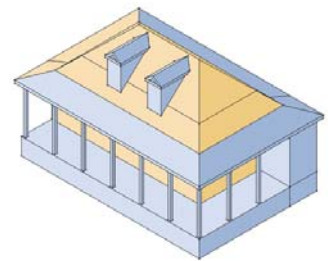
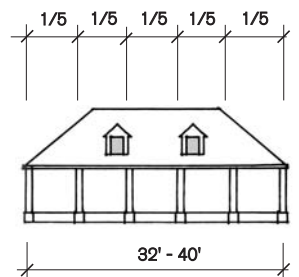


New Orleans

BROAD FRONT MASSING



1- to 2-story Broad Front

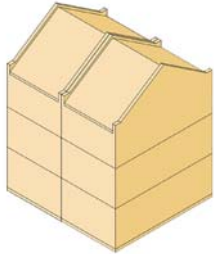


Baton Rouge

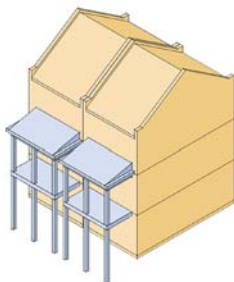
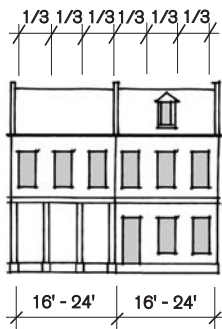


Hammond

MULTI-FAMILY ROWHOUSE MASSING



3-story Multi-family Rowhouse



Lafayette



New Orleans

The essential architectural elements of Louisiana Vernacular buildings include deep one- and two-story porches, high ceilings with vertically proportioned column bays and wall openings, French doors and full-length windows on the ground floor with tall shutters, and first floors raised above the ground.



GREEN BUILDING

Energy Efficiency

An easy way to achieve energy efficiency in new home construction is to follow the Energy Star Program, a national, voluntary program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Energy Star homes are approximately 15–30% more energy efficient than standard national and state energy code requirements. Saving 30% on energy use also translates directly to lower energy bills.



Baton Rouge



Baton Rouge



Abbeville

ACADIAN-INFLUENCED MASSING & COMPOSITION

SIDE GABLE

- >> A deep front porch is recessed within the volume of the house under one roof.
- >> One- to two-story mass
- >> Gable roof with 8 in 12 to 12 in 12 roof pitch
- >> Ridge line of roof runs parallel to entrance facade

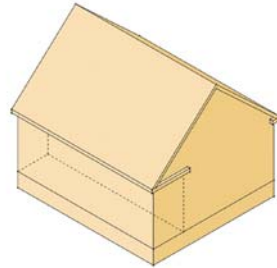
FACADE COMPOSITION

- >> Porch openings typically create a regular rhythm in the facade. Window and door openings are commonly but not always centered on porch openings.
- >> Entrance doors are typically under porches.

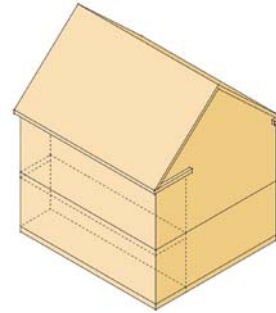
MASSING COMBINATIONS

- >> Larger living spaces may be created by combining side and/or rear wings with the main body.
- >> Attached wings should have similar roof pitches and be treated as separate "additions" to the basic form rather than as part of a single complex form.
- >> Gable dormers may be added to introduce light into half-story and attic spaces.
- >> The architectural character of the attached elements should match that of the main body.

SIDE GABLE MASSING >>

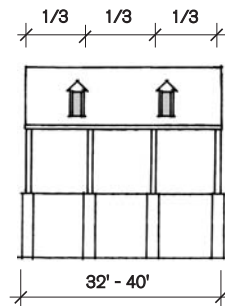
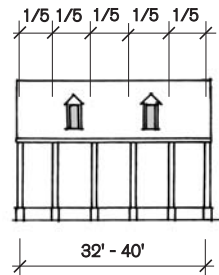


1- to 1 1/2-story Side Gable

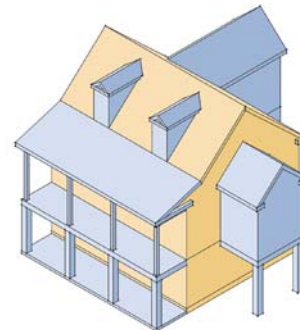
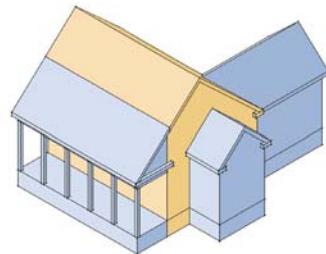


2-story Side Gable

FACADE COMPOSITION DIAGRAMS >>



POSSIBLE MASSING COMBINATIONS >>



Baton Rouge



Mandeville



Vermilionville



Baton Rouge

WALLS, EAVES & ROOFS

WALLS

- >> The first floor of an Acadian-influenced house is typically set up to four feet above the finished grade for a one-story house and up to two feet above finished grade for a two-story house.
- >> For one-story houses, the minimum recommended floor-to-ceiling height is 10 feet.
- >> For two-story houses, the minimum recommended floor-to-ceiling height is 10 feet for the first floor and 9 feet for the second floor.
- >> Typical opening head heights are 8 feet.
- >> Cladding materials: smooth-finish wood or fiber-cement lap siding with 6-inch exposure, brick, light-colored sand-finish stucco

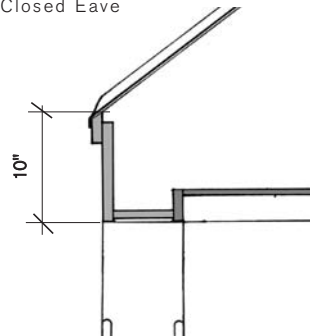
EAVES

- >> Simple unadorned eaves are characteristic of the Acadian-influenced style. They can have exposed rafter ends that are shaped. A frieze board is used below the rafters.
- >> They can also be flush to the wall or beam at the porch, or slightly projecting with a boxed soffit.
- >> Simple, classically proportioned and detailed eaves are also common.

ROOFS

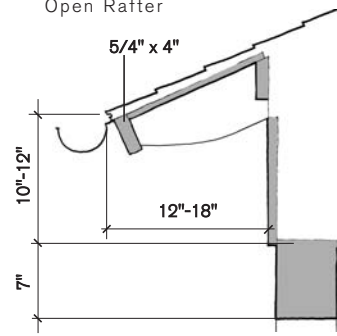
- >> Typically laminated asphalt or composition shingle, wood shingle, 5V crimp or standing seam metal panels

SIMPLE
Closed Eave



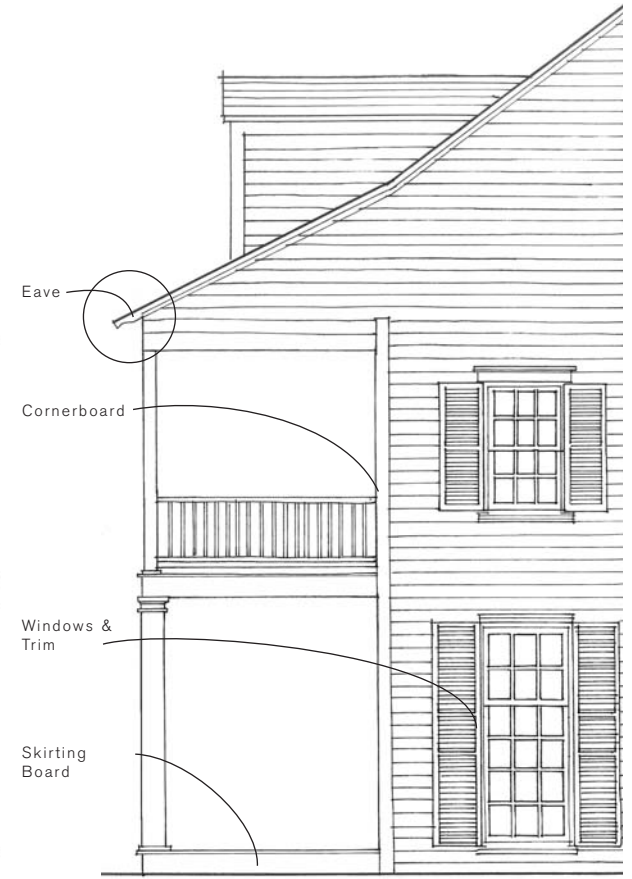
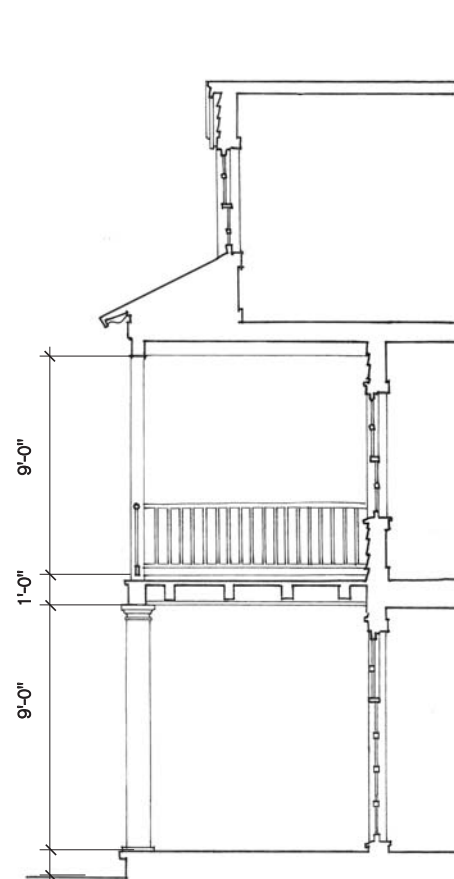
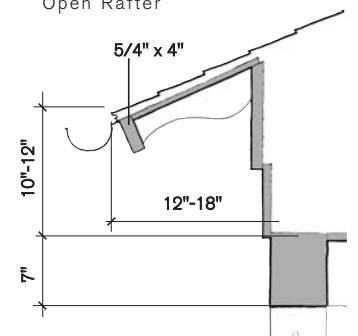
Simple closed eave

ORNATE
Open Rafter



Common open rafter eave

ORNATE
Open Rafter



GREEN BUILDING

Vernacular Design

Many Louisiana homes reflect an architectural response to the subtropical climate. For example, traditional houses have large windows built to the floor, which allow natural daylighting and air circulation.

PORCHES & GALLERIES

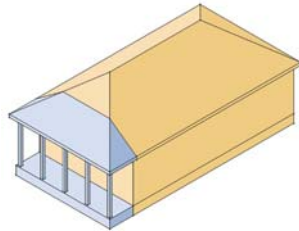
PORCH TYPES & LOCATIONS

- >> Creole-influenced Narrow Front massing types may have hip-roofed porches that read as part of the main roof mass, or as separate elements; the porches run the full length of the facade.
- >> Broad Front massing types, 1 to 2 stories, may have hip-roofed porches that read as part of the main roof mass; the porches run the full length of the facade and can extend beyond the main body of the house and wrap around one or two sides.
- >> Side Gable massing types, 1 to 2 stories, may have shed-roofed porches that read as part of the main roof mass; often the pitch of the roof is slightly less steep than the pitch of the main roof mass. The porches run the full length of the facade.
- >> Minimum recommended porch depth is 8 feet.
- >> Porches are symmetrical and run the full length of the facade.
- >> Columns have a regular spacing of between 8 to 12 feet on center.
- >> Porches are frame construction set up on masonry piers. The space between piers may remain open without infill.

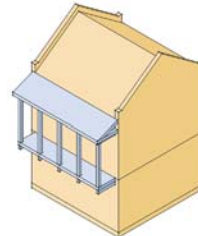


Single-story Porch Partial Elevation

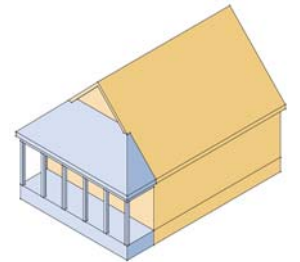
TYPICAL PORCH TYPES & LOCATIONS >>



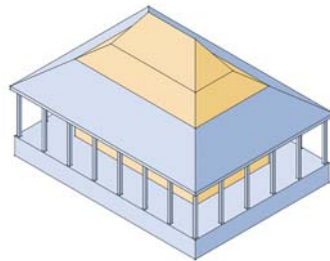
1-story Narrow Front



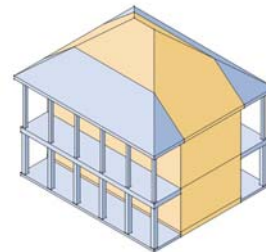
1- to 1 1/2-story Townhouse



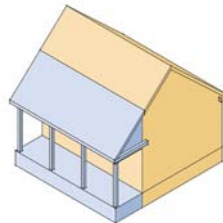
1- to 2-story Narrow Gable Front



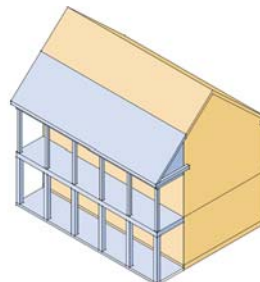
1-story Broad Front Hip Roof



2-story Broad Front Hip Roof



1- to 1 1/2-story Side Gable



2-story Side Gable



Baton Rouge



Baton Rouge



Donaldsonville



Baton Rouge

PORCH ROOFS & EAVES

- >> Shed, gable, or hipped roofs
- >> Typical porch roof slope varies from 4 in 12 to 10 in 12.
- >> Eaves can be either open rafters, simple classically proportioned and detailed entablature, or flush with the porch beam (see eaves on page 39).

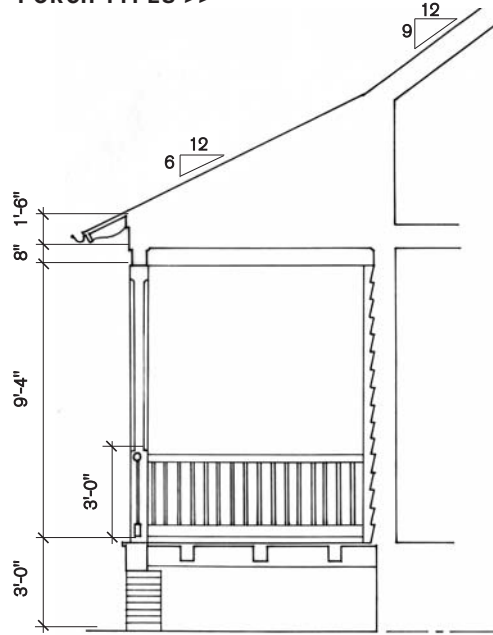
COLUMNS

- >> For one-story porches and the second floor of two-story porches, slender round or square Tuscan columns and chamfered or plain rectangular posts without trim; turned, decorative posts
- >> Brick piers or massive stucco columns are typical for the lower story of two-story porches.
- >> In some instances, columns may span the height of two-story porches; these include a range from plain rectangular posts to columns with classical detailing.
- >> Wood, fiberglass, or composite material; brick or block with stucco

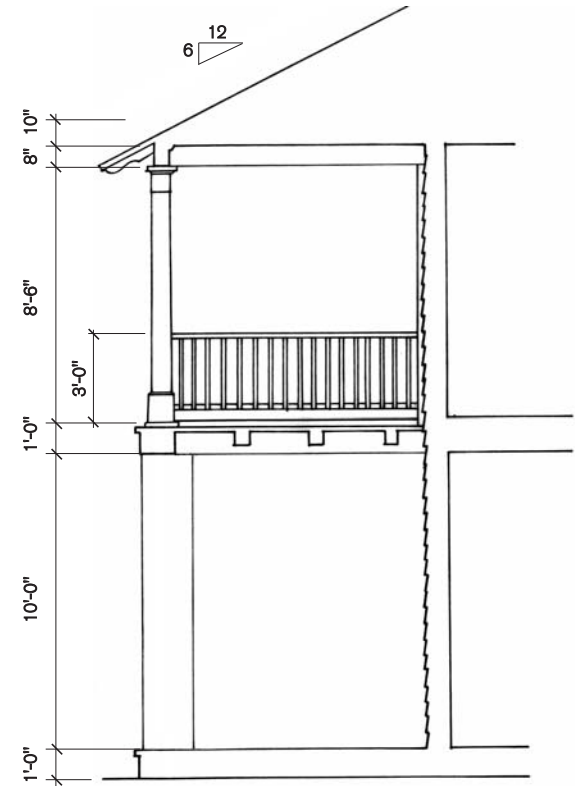
RAILINGS

- >> Square balusters spaced no more than 4 inches on center with intermediate posts for railings over 9 feet in length
- >> Milled wood top and bottom rails with turned or square balusters

PORCH TYPES >>

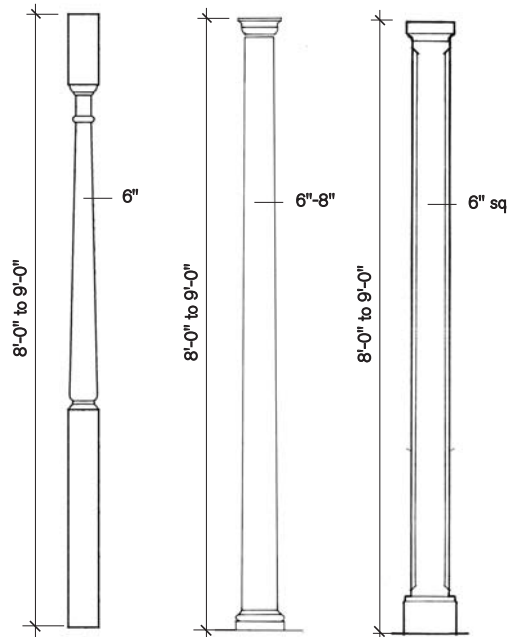


One-story Porch Section



Two-story Porch Section

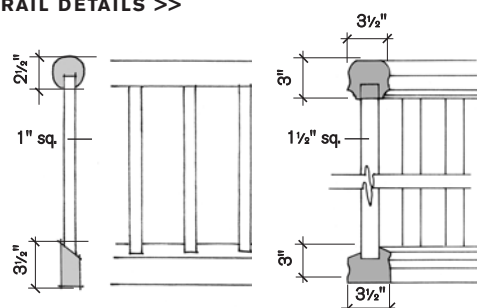
COLUMN TYPES >>



Baton Rouge



RAIL DETAILS >>



New Iberia

GREEN BUILDING

Porches
 Porches provide shading as well as outdoor living space. The south side is the best location for shading purposes. Porches are also commonly located on street fronts; as semi-public social gathering spaces, porches enhance community interactions and safety with more "eyes on the street."

WINDOWS & DOORS

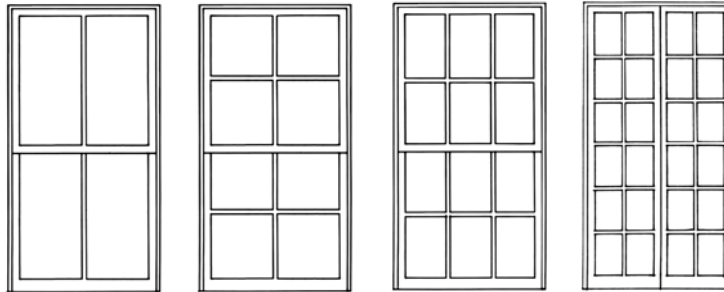
STANDARD WINDOWS

- >> Standard windows are typically double hung or casement and vertical in proportion.
- >> Common muntin patterns are 2 over 2, 4 over 4, or 6 over 6.
- >> Range of sizes:
Width: 2'-8" to 3'-8"
Height: 4'-4" to 6'-0"
- >> Materials: Painted wood, solid cellular PVC or clad wood, or vinyl with brick veneer only; true divided light or simulated divided light (SDL) sash with traditional exterior muntin profile (7/8 inch wide)

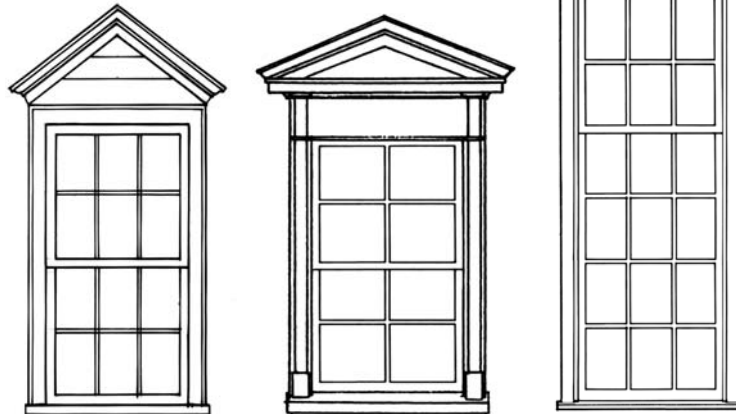
WINDOW ASSEMBLIES & ACCENT WINDOWS

- >> Dormer windows are multi-paned in the 6 over 6 pattern.
- >> Special windows are typically small accent windows with 6 panes or in a 4 over 4 muntin pattern. A single leaf shutter is often used.

STANDARD WINDOWS >>

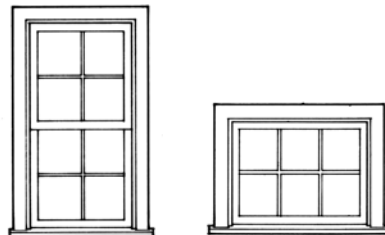


WINDOW ASSEMBLIES >>



Dormer Windows

Floor-to-Ceiling Window



Accent Windows



Plaquemine



Baton Rouge

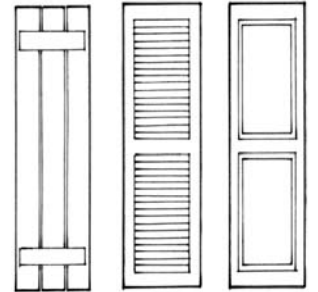


Lafayette



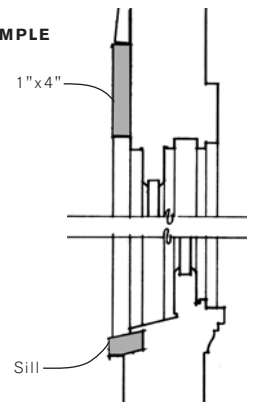
Vermilionville

SHUTTERS >>

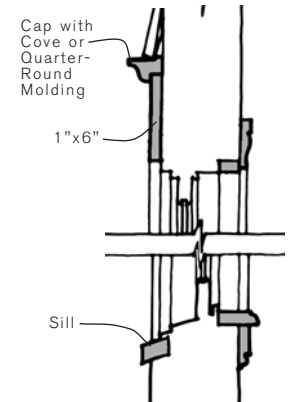


TYPICAL TRIM EXAMPLES >>

SIMPLE



ORNATE



DOORS

- >> Multi-pane doors are often used in lieu of windows on the first floor under the porch.
- >> Entry doors are typically 4- or 6-paneled and include either a transom or a transom and side lights.
- >> Materials: Wood, fiberglass, or steel with traditional stile-and-rail proportions and raised panel profiles, painted or stained

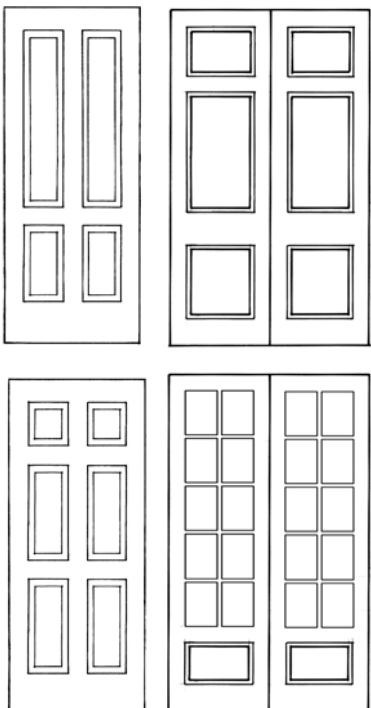
TRIM

- >> Typical 4-inch-wide trim with back band
- >> Classical door surrounds are sometimes used at the front door.
- >> Stone or wood lintels are common elements clad in brick or stucco.

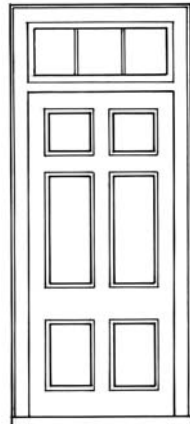
SHUTTERS

- >> Shutters can be louvered, raised panel, or batten.
- >> Wood or composite, sized to match window sash or door frame and mounted with hardware so that they are operable

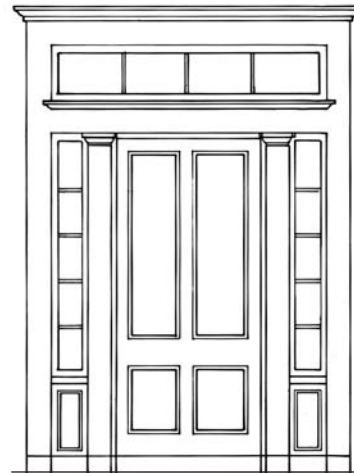
DOOR TYPES



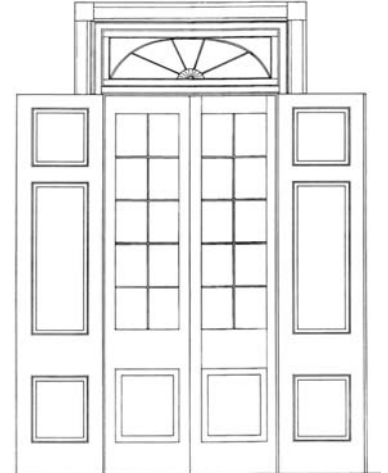
DOOR ASSEMBLIES >>



COMMON
Single Door with Transom



ORNATE
Single Door with Transom and Side Lights



ORNATE
Double Door with Transom and Shutters



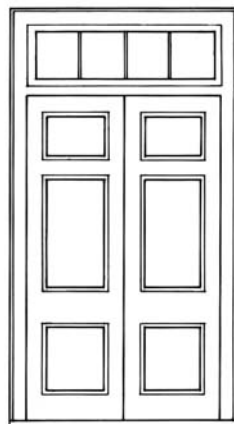
Baton Rouge



New Orleans



New Orleans



COMMON
Double Door with Transom