



## The Low Country Style

The "Lowcountry" was originally defined as the area along the South Carolina coast below the Fall Line or Sandhills, but it's the culture, architecture, and the cuisine that really speak to people. The slower southern pace of life in this area of the country makes it a favorite place to live, with palmetto trees, big front porches, rocking chairs, and a nice cold pitcher of sweet tea.

A distinctive element of the Lowcountry is the architecture styling of its houses, which developed in the late 1700's and early 1800's for the subtropical climate of the southeast. Roots of the Low Country Style can be found in the "Tidewater" Style. Wide shady verandas with ceiling fans and deep overhangs accented by columns keep the sitting areas on porches cool. Raised porches are on piers or pilings to keep the first floor raised, often over swampy ground and hurricane flooding. Raised porches also have the benefit of creating outdoor sitting areas that feel more private from the nearby walkway.

Architectural styling tends to be void of excessive trimwork or detailing - from the eaves to porch elements to windows and doors. Porch columns are simple timbers with chamfered corners, or simple but elegant box columns. Window framing is made with simple 1x material, and shutters are usually plank type or board and batten - made from material readily available and inexpensive. Whether simple or more refined, the styling has an air of elegance about it. The Low Country vernacular is slightly more refined but very similar to the Creole style of southern Mississippi and Louisiana since climates are very similar and tend to dictate the needs of the architecture. Features of the homes were built with practical living in mind, like sitting outside in the heat, and cooling the house with large windows. Many similarities exist between the two in both architecture and landscaping. Creole tends to run from Louisiana eastward, and Low Country tends to run from South Carolina south and westward with a mix of the two in the Alabama/Georgia region.

# LOW COUNTRY

### Key Elements of style

1. Large, raised verandas or front porches, frequently in a wrap-around fashion.
2. Simple massing of the main body with smaller appendages to side or rear.
3. Steep pitched roofs with side gables or broad hipped roofs over porches. Moderately deep overhangs.
4. Full height or tall, vertically proportioned double hung windows with tall shutters.
5. Tall front doors with transom windows above.
6. Large spacious rooms with tall ceilings and open plan.
7. Reflective metal roofing with exposed rafter tails for more vernacular character or an enclosed eave for more refined character.



LOW COUNTRY HOUSE



# Low Country Massing

Designed for the wet, hot climates of the Southeast coastline, a Lowcountry house is best known for having at least one expansive porch, protecting the house against the sun with a broad hip roof. In this way, they are designed similarly to French Colonial homes of the Gulf Coast. Our Low Country Vernacular home focuses on the more simple, more vernacular aspects of design while keeping some of the signature elements.

The vernacular house typically has gable ends with a broad roof over an expanded porch below. The porches span across the front and often around at least one side of the house. In more rural settings, along a coastline, the roof is typically a hip roof, but in more urban areas, like a neighborhood, the rooflines tend to be gable-ended. Likewise, on more coastline historic examples, we find the usual gable front dormer, whereas more recent and modern and urban examples of dormers are the simple shed roof type. The hipped roof had a pitch break which also helped control rain water runoff, where we typically see an actual roof break on gabled examples.



photograph by Jupiterimages Corporation

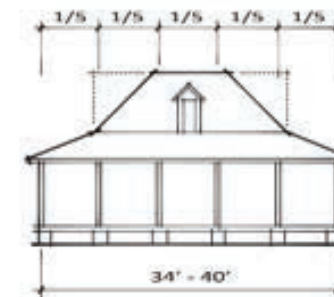
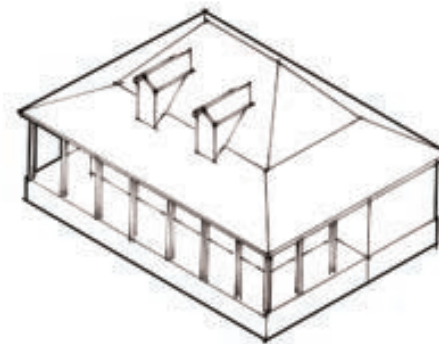
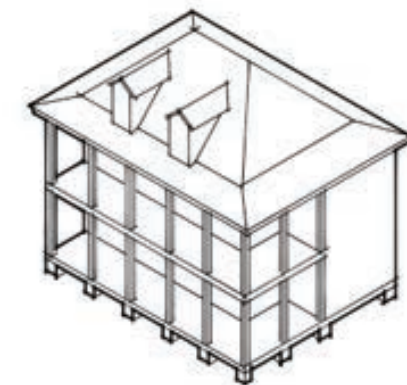
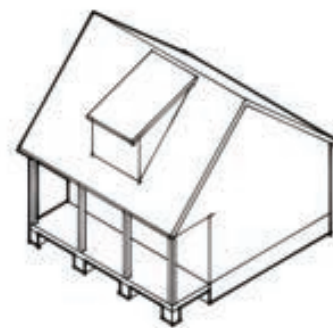
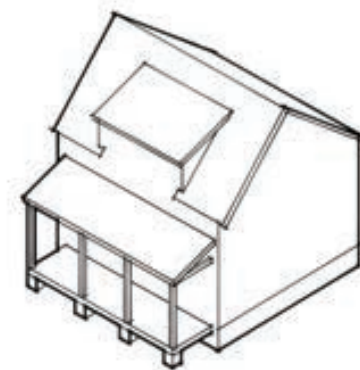
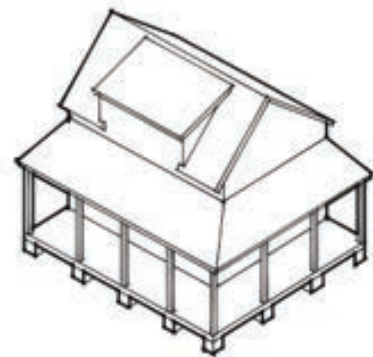
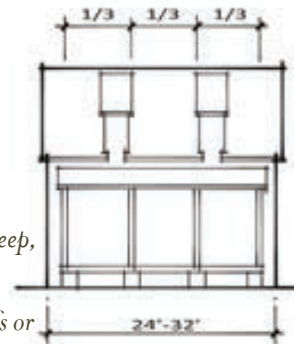


**NOTE:**

Main body roof pitches are more steep, between 8:12 and 12:12. Porch roofs or shed dormer roofs are lower pitch, between 2:12 and 5:12.

More Urban conditions tend to have gable ended roof with separated lower pitched roofs over the porches below. It is common and appropriate for a corner house to have a wrap around porch.

Shed dormers typically occur on 1 1/2 story houses with living space on the upper level.



**Low Country Vernacular**

**Low Country Refined**



## Low Country

**NOTE:**

More Rural conditions tend to have broad hipped roofs covering house and porch. Houses with more of a view to greens or water typically had double porches that wrapped around the house.

Gable front dormers typically occur when only attic space is above the main level of the house.

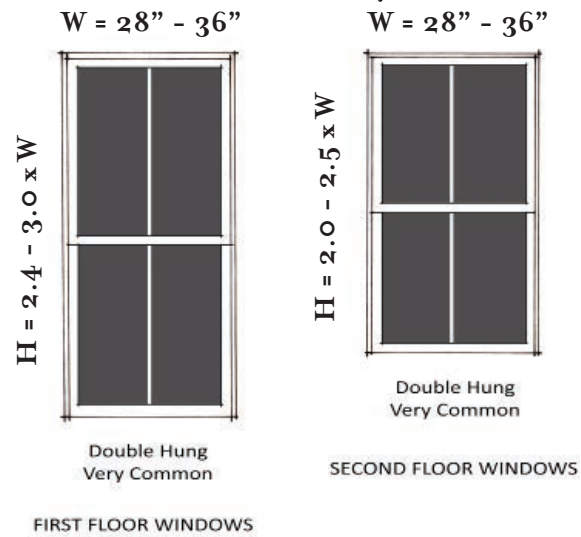
The Lowcountry was originally the region of the east coast of South Carolina below the Fall Line and Sandhills. The Low Country influence can be found in areas like Hilton Head island, Bluffton, Beaufort, and even around Savannah, but the charm of large canopy trees, big porches, large windows, and rocking chairs appeals to nearly everyone.

The eastern coast was settled by Europeans of English decent but also heavily influenced by subtropical climate, humidity, and heat.

This climate creates the need for deep porches and verandas covered by broad roofs. The porches often surround the entire house, but in modern construction we mainly see a full front porch and/or a wrap around porch to one side.

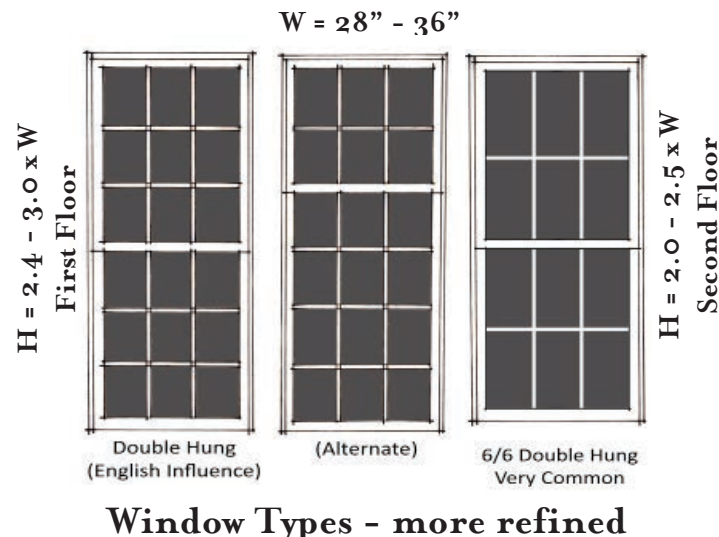


# Low Country Windows & Doors



Windows should be a tall, vertical proportion with large clear lites. First floor windows at the porch should be tallest and largest windows. Second floor windows can have a less tall proportion.

Muntins should be 7/8" wide.



Windows are to be placed on side walls within the first eight feet from the corner of the Main Body.

Window trim is typically simple, and only slightly more decorative the more refined.



Window Examples



## Low Country Elements

Wall Materials:  
Smooth finish wood or fiber cement lap siding with 5" exposure, brick base, light-colored sand-finish stucco.

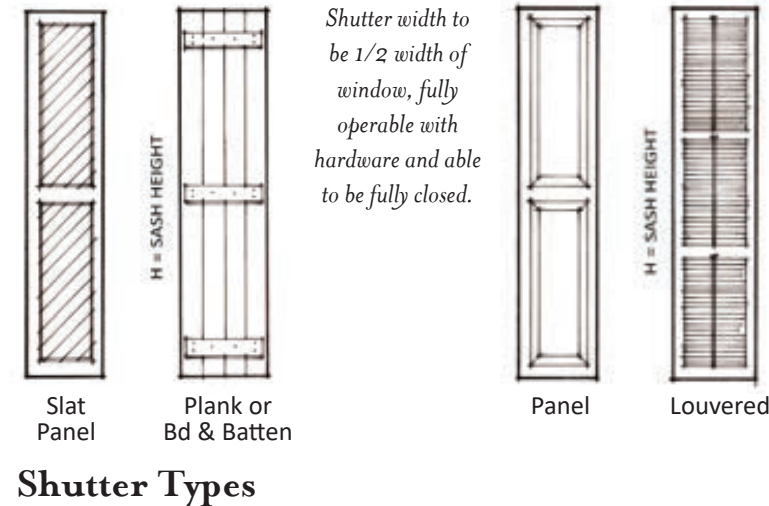
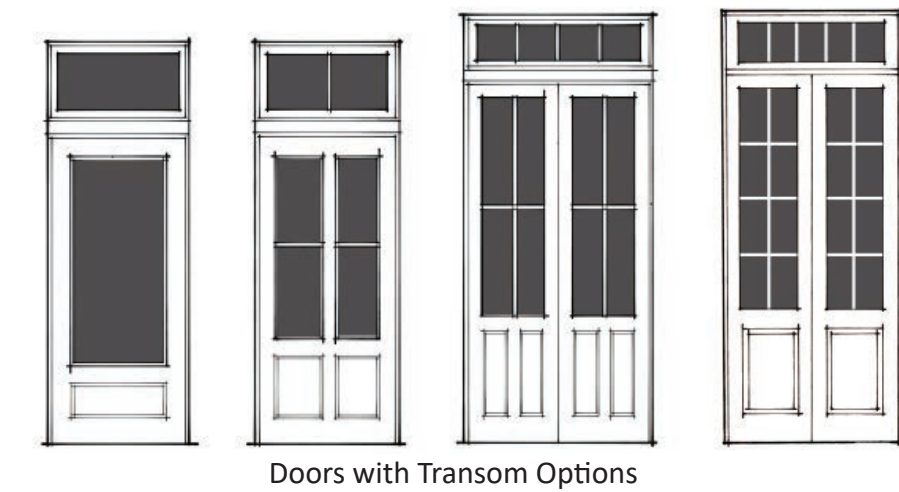
Doors: 3/4 glass or solid front doors with transom. Transom height ranges from 12" - 20". If using muntins, keep lites in square or vertical proportion.

Windows: typically very tall openings of double hung with simple muntin patterns.

Shutters: Shutters range from simple board & batten to elegant louver.

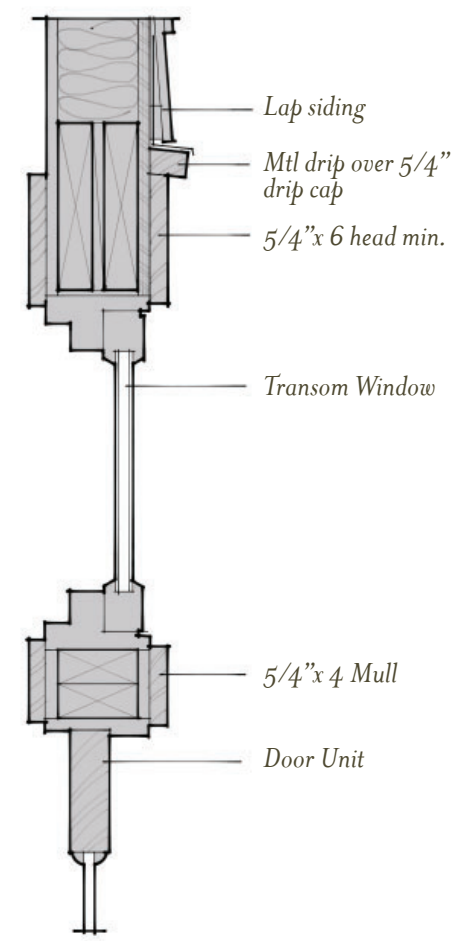
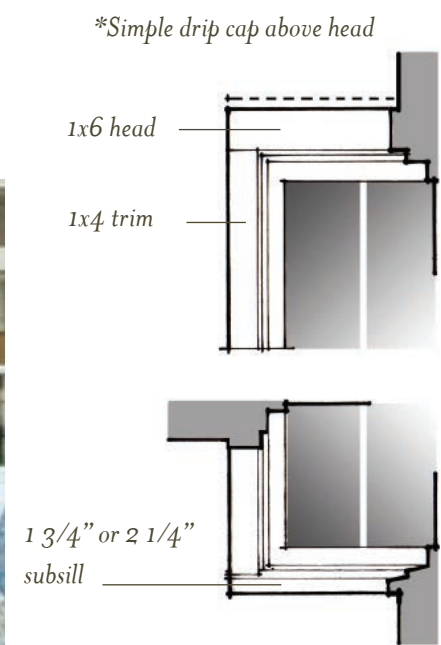
Roof: asphalt shingle or standing seam or 5-V metal roof

## Window Types - more vernacular



Ganged windows or doors should have a minimum of a 4" mull, typically using 2 studs for framing and facing with 5/4"x4".

All casings should be 5/4" when adjacent to siding material.



Low Country Vernacular Door Types



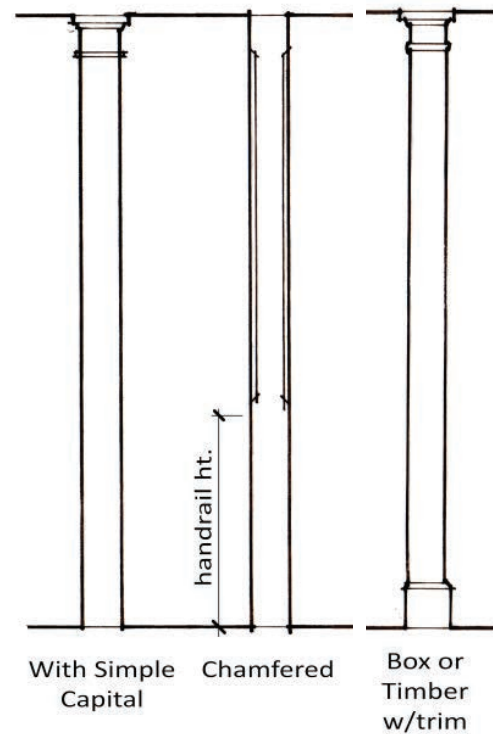
# Low Country Elements

Low Country columns are simple, quite often timber columns with a chamfer size ranging from 1/2" to 1 1/4" inches. If a railing is attached to the column, the chamfer always starts above the railing. The top of the chamfer usually stops within 4 - 8" of the top of the column, equal to the size of the column.

Timber columns range in size from 4" to 8" max. Box columns range in size from 6" to 10" max, unless unique or special design.

Low Country elements are simple, yet elegant in nature with minimal trim work.

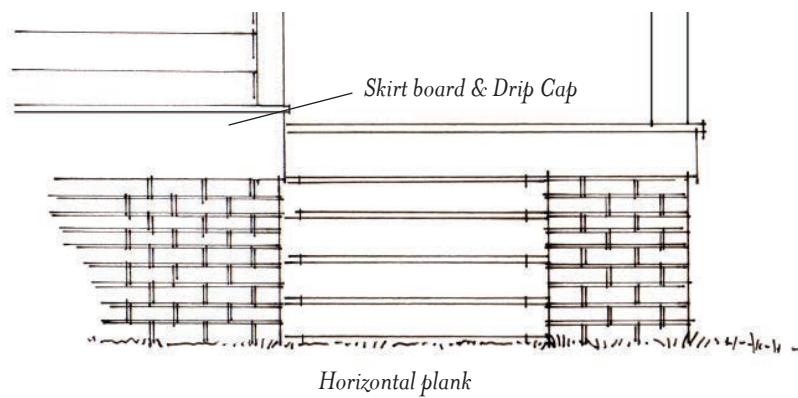
Minimum depth of front porch is between 8 and 10 feet to create an outdoor room. Porches are typically symmetrical and run the length of the facade, but can extend beyond the main body of the house and wrap the side.



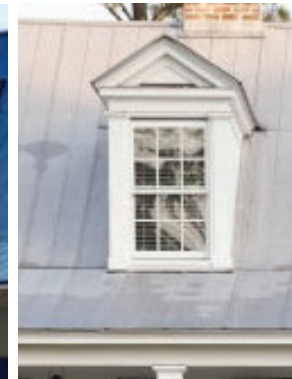
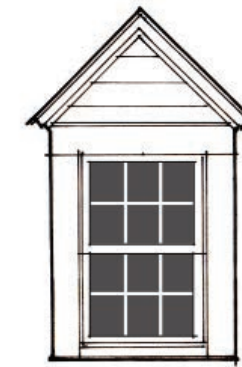
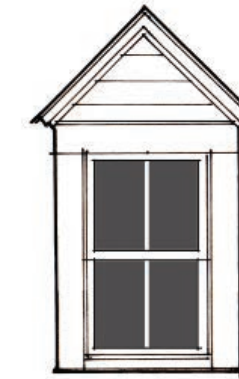
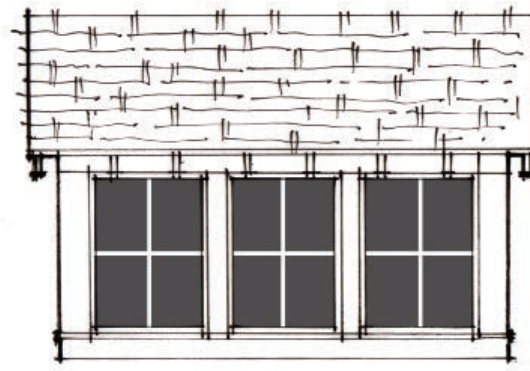
Column Types



Rotated or Straight Square Balluster - Very Common



Typ. Railing and Porch Details



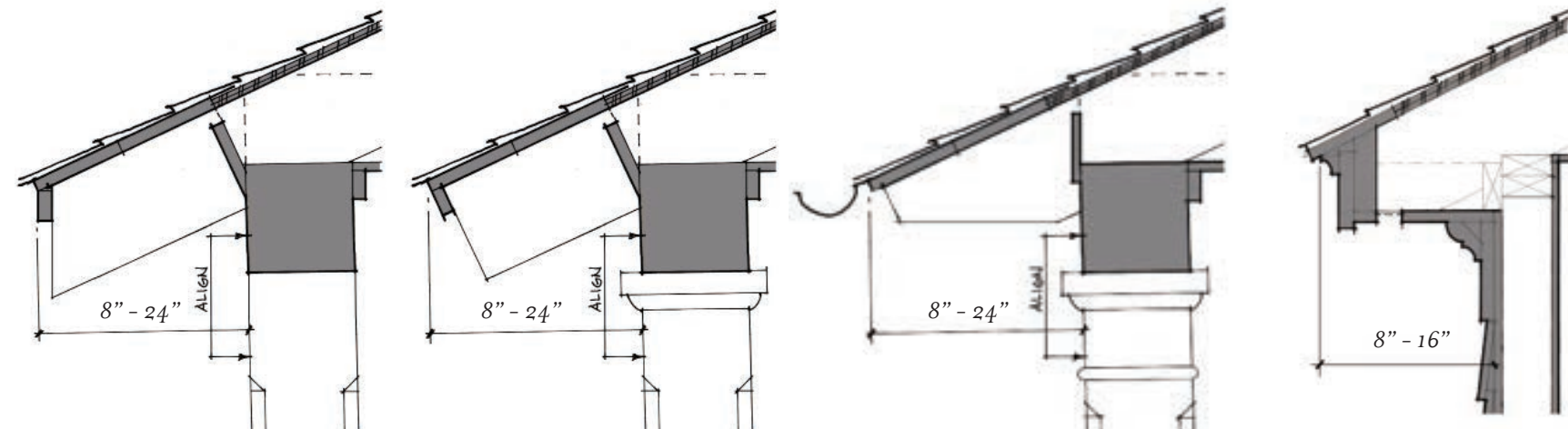
## Low Country Dormer / Window Types

Low Country vernacular dormers are most commonly shed roof type only when the upper floor has habitable rooms. Shed dormers most commonly have any number of windows, from a single, up to quadruple ganged window, separated by 4" mulls. Shed dormers usually have between a 2:12 and 4:12 pitch, but can be greater for more dramatic effect.

More refined (or rural and coastline) Low Country designs tend to have

double gallery porches with broad hipped roofs and utilize gable-front pitched dormers with single windows that typically only illuminate attic spaces.

The main body roof pitch is most commonly 9/12-10/12, but can range from 8/12 to 12/12, with secondary roofs being as low pitched as 6/12. Typical porch roof slope, or common pitch break, varies from 2/12 to 4/12.



Low Country Eave Conditions



### Low Country Elements

Wall Materials: Smooth finish wood or fiber cement lap siding with 5" exposure, brick base, light-colored sand-finish stucco.

Doors: 3/4 glass or solid front doors with transom. Transom height ranges from 12" -20". If using muntins, keep lites in square or vertical proportion.

Windows: typically very tall openings of double hung with simple muntin patterns.

Shutters: Shutters range from simple board & batten to elegant louver.

Roof: asphalt shingle or standing seam or 5-V metal roof



# Low Country Variations & Inspirations



## Low Country

Designed for the wet, hot climates of the Southeast coastline, the Low-country house is best known for having at least one expansive porch, protecting the house against the sun with a broad hip roof. In this way they are designed similarly to the French Colonial homes of the Gulf Coast.

Porches span across the front and often around at least one side of the house. Along the coastline, the roof is typically hipped with gable-front dormers, but in more urban areas, roofs tend to be more gable ended and dormers tend to be shed roof.



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