

The Southern Classical Style

The Southern Classical style takes its cues from historic classic styles such as Federal and Greek Revival with a dash of French Colonial thrown in. Federal style was the dominant style in America from 1780 - 1820 and largely derived from the "Adam" style and a refinement of the Georgian style. Greek Revival style picked up in the 1820's and was the predominant style till the Civil War. Its popularity led it to be called the National style. Publications of Robert Adam's work in the early 1770s led to wide application of the rich vocabulary he had derived from his studies of Roman buildings. The most popular pattern books and carpenter's guides by Asher Benjamin helped spread the details of the Greek Revival style.

Both Federal and Greek Revival styles are most often a simple box in shape, commonly with gabled roofs. The main difference in the two is in their treatment of the accent elements in massing. Both styles are most commonly symmetrical in their massing. Federal massing is more of a straight-forward box with emphasis on the centrally located entry. The Greek Revival style is particularly noted by the pediment front, usually centered in the front facade. Southern, more coastal versions, include some asymmetrical designs with the front gable element and side porches or wrap around porches. More elegant versions have the complete front pediment, while more vernacular versions simply have the front facing gable.

One of the most loved southern stereotypes in American architecture is the full-columnaded Greek Revival mansion or plantation home. This type was birthed from French Colonial influences in southern Louisiana. Much of that influence bled over into Mississippi and the Southeast region and is the reason that many of the Greek Revival homes in this area evolved to have full width living porches, many times on both floors. The main distinction of the Southern vernacular Greek Revival style and the French Colonial style is the enduring element of the pediment front or front gable. This one stylistic flair really makes a difference in Classical homes of the deep south versus those examples from the north and northeast.



SOUTHERN CLASSICAL

Key Elements of style

1. One- or two-story porches, often with gabled "temple front" facades.
2. Simple, well proportioned volumes with consistent roof pitches.
3. The use of side wings and porches are added to make more complex shapes.
4. Symmetrical composition of doors and windows.
5. Simplified versions of Classical details for eaves and cornices and columns on porches in either Tuscan, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian order.
6. Multi-pane windows that are either 6 over 6 or 9 over 9 pane patterns.



SOUTHERN CLASSICAL HOUSE

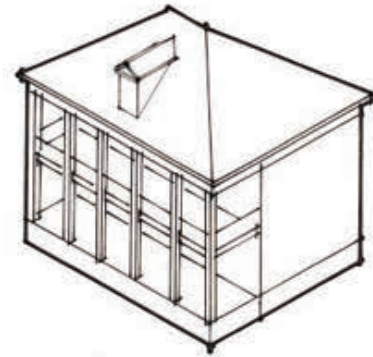
Classical Massing

The Southern Classical house starts with a simple box form with additive features of side wings and a dominant central portico feature, which can be one or two stories. In general, detailing and proportions are simplified and applied to the common massing types found in the south.

More vernacular versions of the broad front mass have very simple detailing of the side gables. Front facing gables are always shown as a temple front, or pediment with a 5/12 to 6/12 pitch. Side gables can be either a pediment with a 5/12 to 6/12 pitch or open gable with return eave and a steeper pitch of 6/12 to 8/12, but more commonly the latter is found in the south. Hipped or gable roofs are suitable for the main body roof. Hipped roofs would be lower pitched at 5/12 to 6/12.

Porches are a common theme in the south, whether a central portico or a full length front porch. Examples in the Southeast are often full length front porches. Porticos quite often have a pediment front, but flat roof examples are also prevalent. Three bay and 5 bay porches are the most common with either shed or hipped roofs between 1/12 and 4/12 pitch. One-story side wings are common to this type, but front porches are rarely seen wrapping the corners of the main body to engage the side wings.

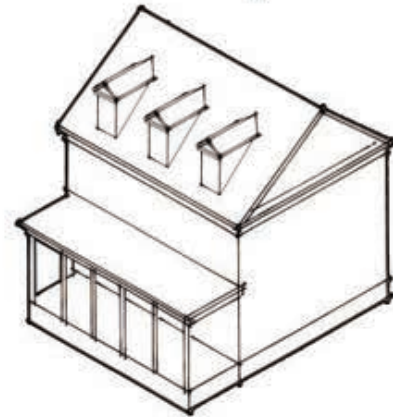
The basic volumes include the Main Body and Side and Rear Wings, which should all be similar in form, roof pitch, and character to the Main Body of the house. Larger living areas can take advantage of side and rear wings. Gabled or hipped dormers are more common on broad front roof, if a temple front gable is not present. The architectural character of the attached parts should match that of the main body. The main floor is typically 36" - 48" above grade. The first floor ceiling height is typically 10 feet, and the second floor ceiling height is commonly 9 feet, although many modern houses use 10 feet for both.



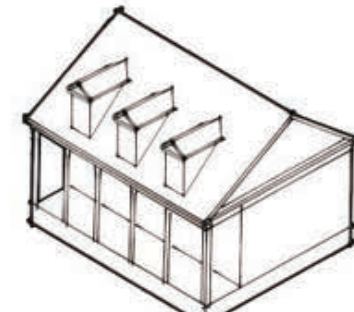
Mansion T3
Main Body 40'-48' wide max.

Neighborhood General T3-T4
32' - 40' wide

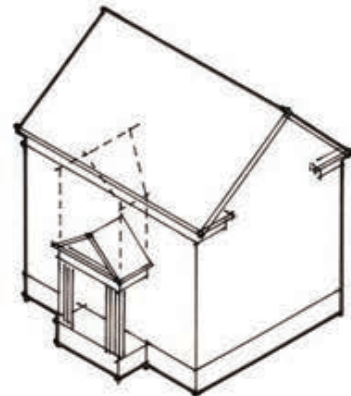
Urban T4-T5
18' - 32' wide



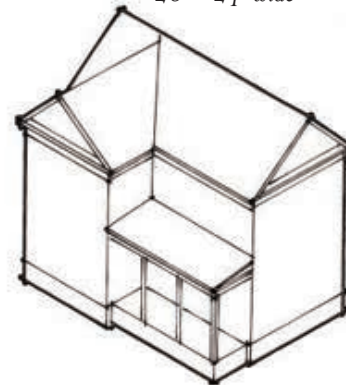
20' - 24' wide



32' - 40' wide



Symmetrical 5 Bay Most Common
32' - 40' wide



Asymmetrical
32' - 40' wide



Narrow Front, 3 Bay
18' - 32' wide



Cottage, 3 - 5 Bay Most Common
24' - 32' wide



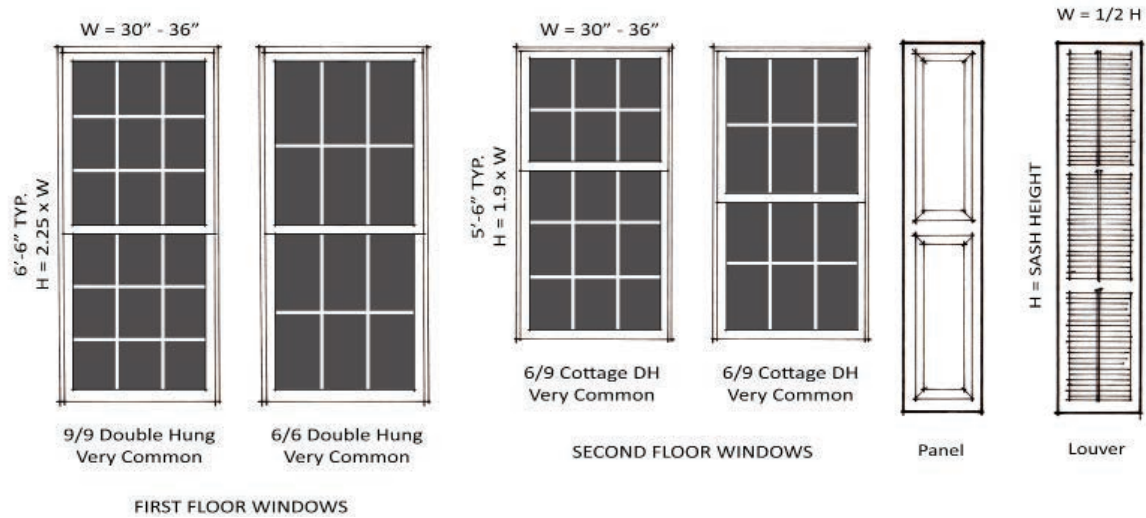
Southern Classical

The Southern Classical house, in its most basic form, is a simple box with additive features of side wings and/or a dominant central portico feature or full length porch.

Double galleries are common on larger Classical homes in the south. First floor porch is most common in the south. Least common is the stoop, but it's very common in the north.

Low-pitched broad front, gable-ended roofs are most common with the signature pediment or single facing front gable marking the entry or center of the house.

Classical Windows & Doors



Classical Window Types



Photograph by Steve Mouzon

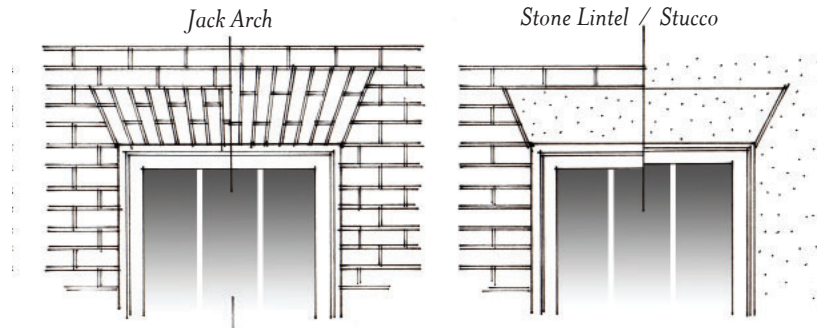
Windows and panes should have vertical proportion. Most Common arrangements are 9/9 or 6/6, but other variations are also found. Casings for windows should be 1x4 minimum and 1x6 maximum. Muntins should be true or simulated divided lite only and 7/8" wide.

Shutter

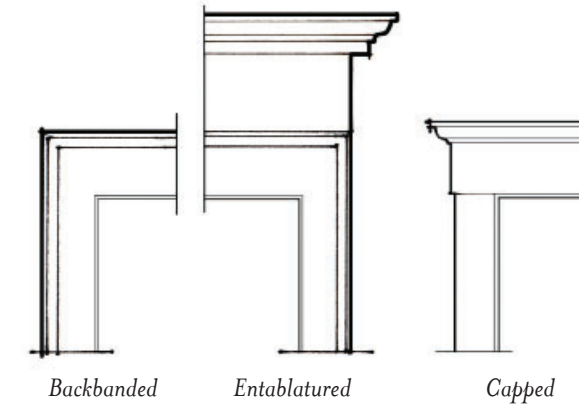


Photograph by Steve Mouzon

Classical Window Lintels



Windows in brick must have brick mold. Use an 8" Jack Arch for openings up to 40". Use a 12" Jack Arch for openings up to 60". Square stone lintels are less common. Stone sills are common with stone lintels.



Classical Window Casings



Triple paired windows are very common in this style, usually in special locations.

Classical Special Windows



The southern vernacular borrows from the French Colonial style with lower paneled French doors and more decorative transoms. Shutters are only used if no sidelites are present and the door surround is kept simple, with perhaps a capped head.



photograph by Steve Mouzon

The door and surrounding glazing should be set in a larger, more decorative frame of wood or masonry, quite often resembling columns and beams. Sidelites should be narrow in width.

Classical Door Types

In general, Classical trimwork is a little more substantive. Mullions are a minimum of 4" and quite often 6". Trim around doors often incorporates half-columns and an entablature. Solid paneled doors are very common, and in the Southern Classical vernacular, French doors are also found.

Transoms are rectangle or fan shaped.



Classical Windows & Doors

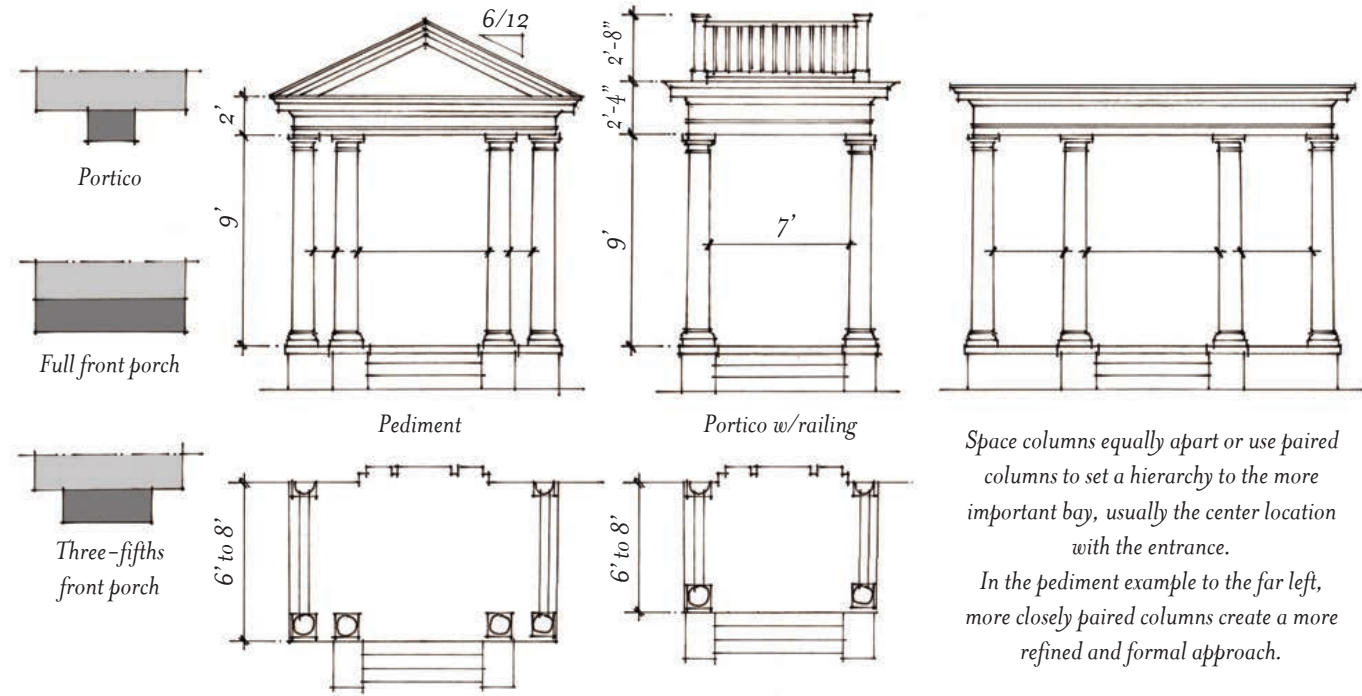
Windows: typically large vertical openings of double hung units. May be single, paired, or even tripled. Surrounds usually have some decorative element.

Doors: Wood doors with panels, usually solid with sidelites, but also may include large glass panes. Entry doors can be single or paired. Door surrounds are usually more decorative than window surrounds.

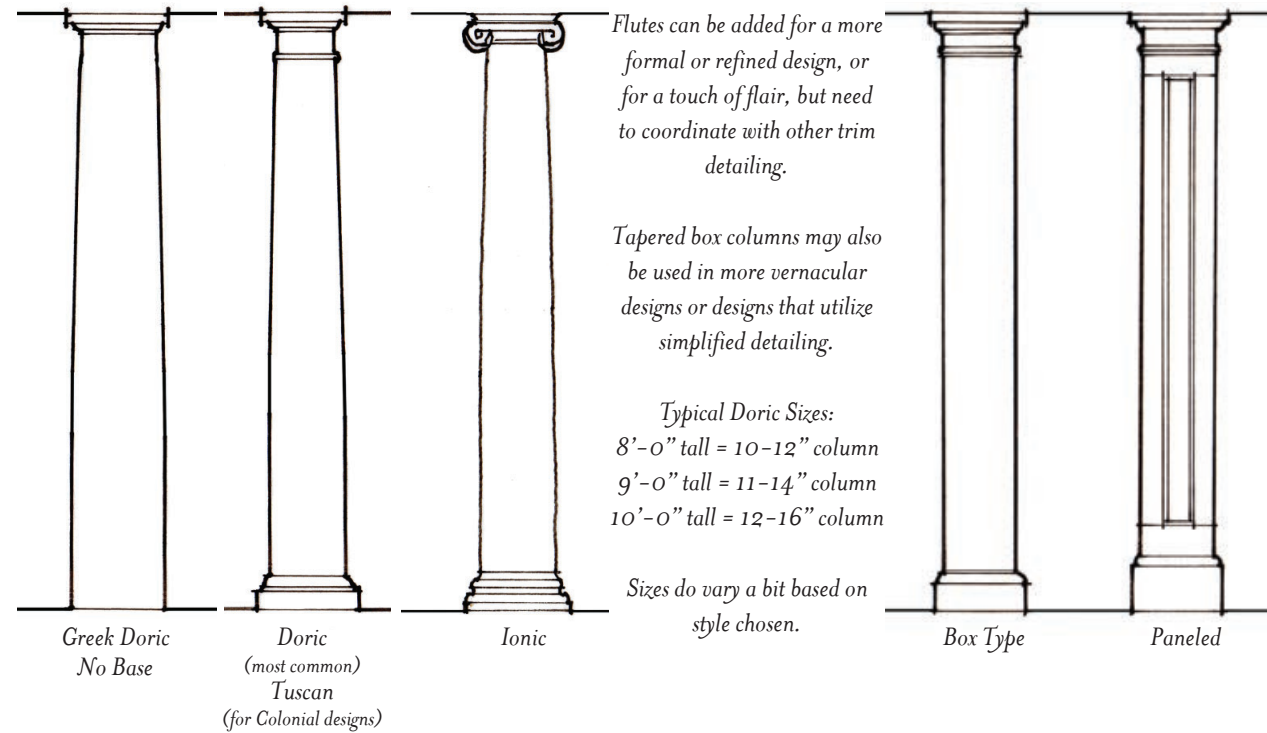
Lintels & Sills: Stone or brick arch lintels are common. Sills often match lintels and can be decorative.

Shutters: Louvered or solid panel shutters may be present only on single units, and must be fully functional.

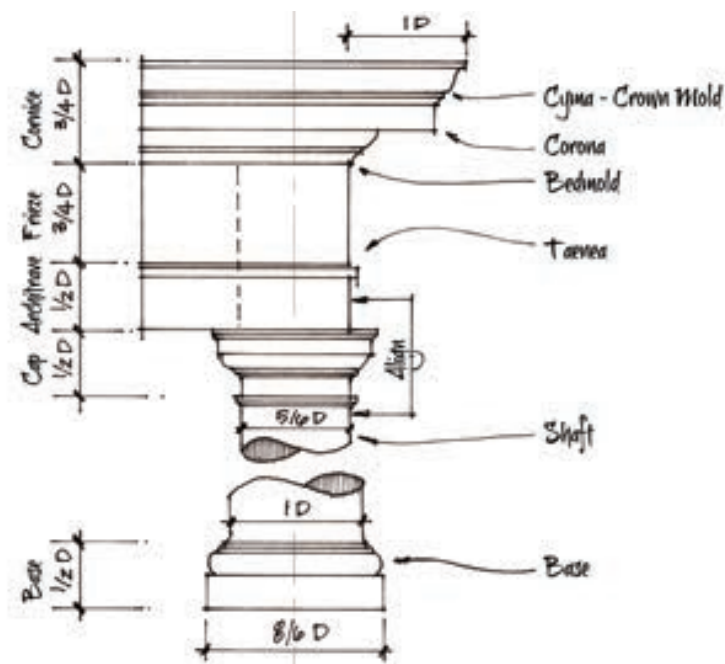
Classical Elements



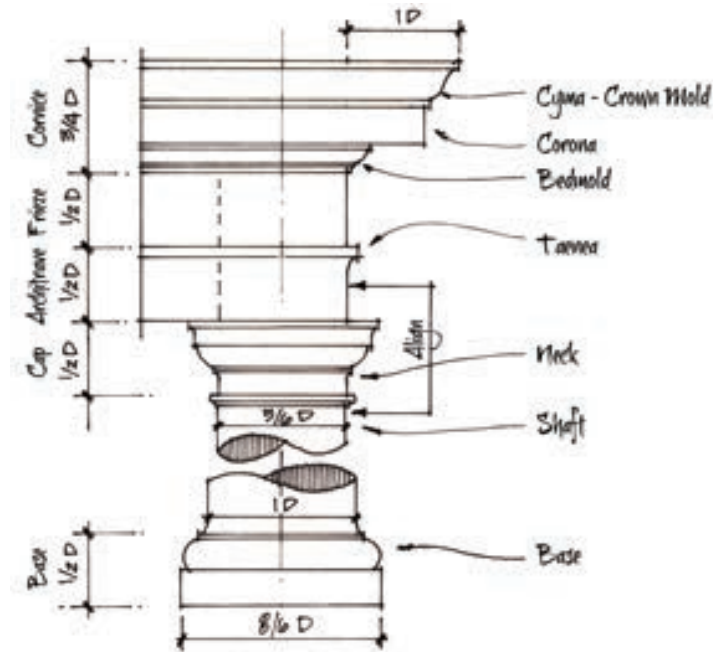
Classical Porch Elements



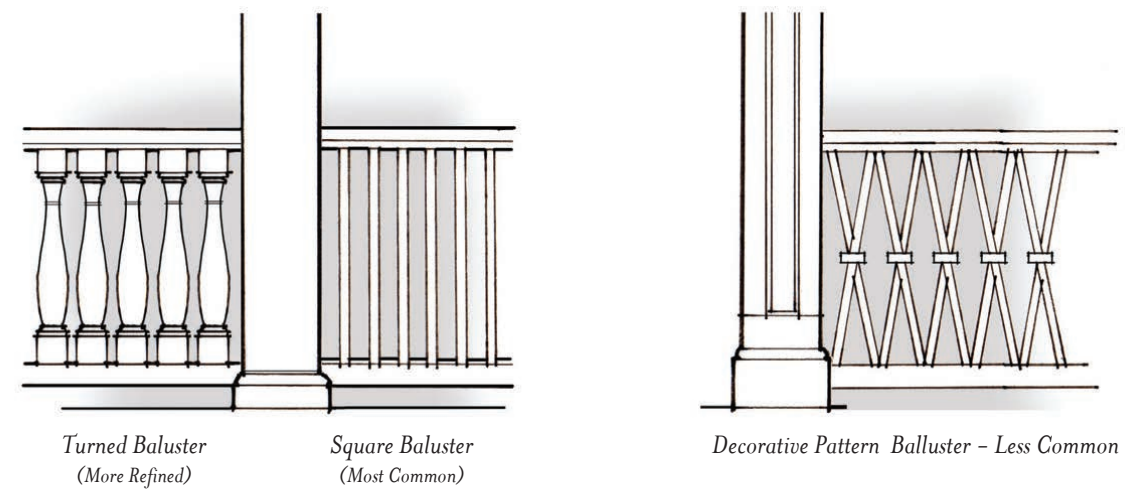
Classical Columns



Doric Entablature

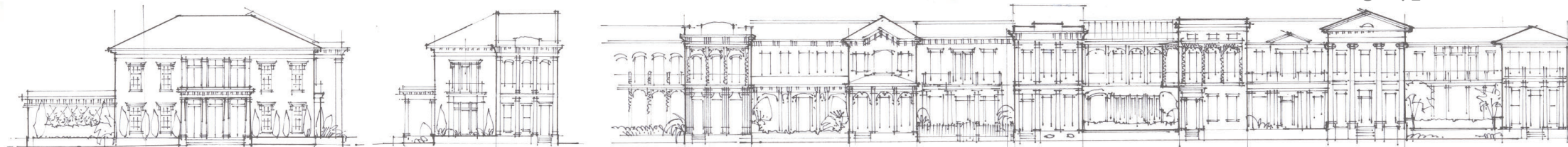


Tuscan Entablature



Classical Railing Types

See column types above. Handrails are always contoured. Decorative Ballusters vary greatly and are less common. Decorative wrought iron railings are more common than the turned baluster, but less common than the square baluster.



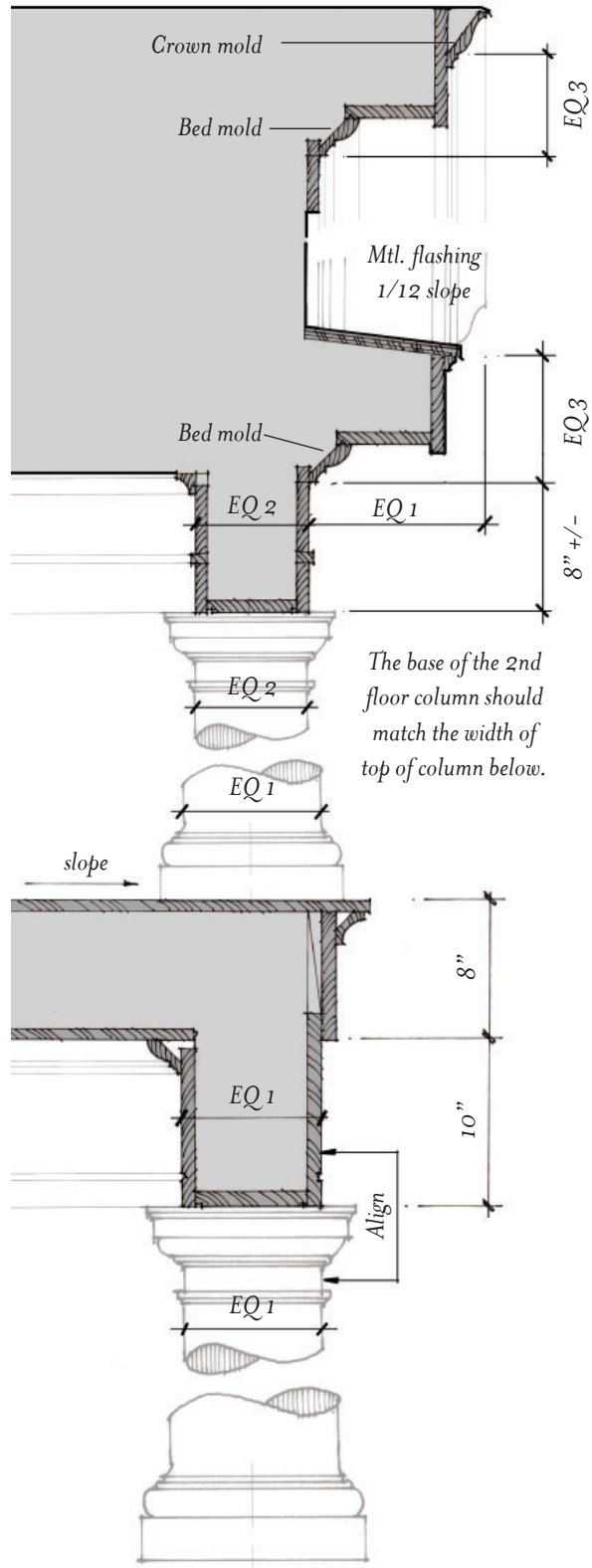
Classical Elements

Columns:
Classical round columns, Greek Doric, Doric, Tuscan, and Ionic. Box type columns, either straight or tapered, are more vernacular but often used in the south. Overall shape and dimensions of base and capital should mimic the Doric or Tuscan style.

Beams above columns must always be aligned with top of column shaft.

Railings:
Railings are wood and either square, turned, or decorative pattern. Wrought iron railings can be used with classical columns or iron columns.

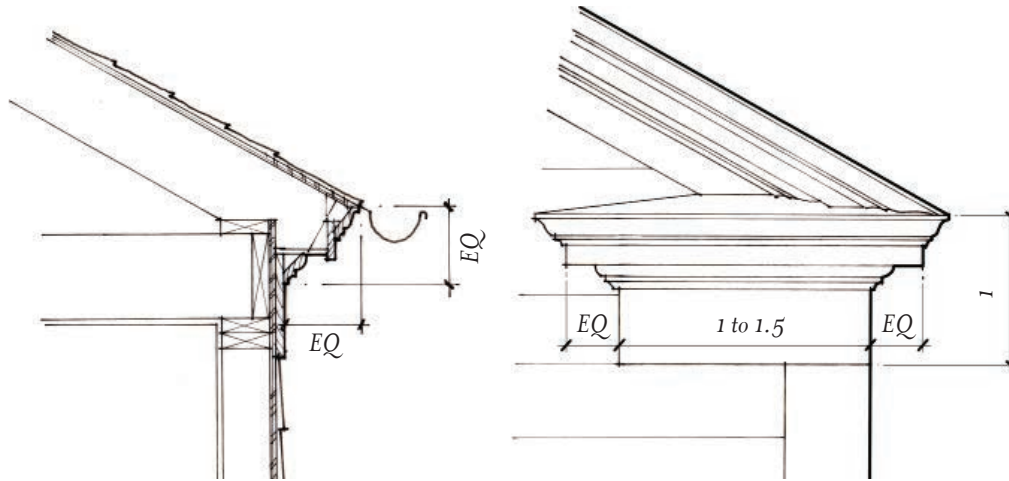
Classical Elements



Front facing gables are always designed as a temple front, or pediment, with a 5/12 to 6/12 pitch.

Side gables can be either a pediment with a 5/12 to 6/12 pitch or open gable with return eave and a steeper pitch of 6/12 to 8/12, but more commonly the latter is found in the south.

Hipped or gable roofs are suitable for the main body roof. Hipped roofs would be lower pitched between 4/12 and 6/12.



All gable ends must incorporate a return eave. Above the return, use low slope of 1/12 to 3/12 max with metal flashing and let the raking cornice resolve into itself.

The use of a half-round gutters with round downspouts is preferred. Ogee shaped gutters can be used if built into the cornice / cyma.

Classical Eave & Return Eave



Dormers only have one window and are proportioned similarly to the windows in the wall below.

Classical Dormers



<<<< Cornice enrichments range from the vernacular exposed rafter emulation of mutules and modillions in the far left example to the more refined Greek Revival cornice on the far right. >>>>
The most common in Southern Classical are represented by the two examples above - clean closed eave, pediments, and returned eaves at gable ends.



Classical Elements

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Classical Variations & Inspirations



photograph by Steve Mouzon



Classical

Wall Materials: Smooth finish wood or fiber cement lap siding with 5" exposure, brick base, brick, painted brick, or light-colored sand-finish stucco. Corner boards are minimum 1x6.

The main floor is typically 3' - 4' above finish grade at porch.

Roof: 5V metal roof, standing seam, slate or synthetic slate, asphalt shingles. All colors to be approved by ARB. Half round gutters with round downspouts are preferred. Ogee shape must be approved.

Windows: Wood or clad units with true or simulated divided lites.

Trim: Wood, composite, cellular PVC or polyurethane millwork; stucco, stone, or cast stone.



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