

The Southern Farmhouse Style

The Southern Farmhouse style has its roots in the National Folk style that was prevalent across the country between 1850-1930. National Folk style is also very similar to Victorian styles where much of the massing we see is identical to Queen Anne and Folk Victorian homes of the late 19th century. Where National Folk style is simplified and fairly void of ornament, both Queen Anne and Folk Victorian fit more appropriately in the ornament category. Another way to say this would be, National Folk would be considered more "vernacular", and perhaps Queen Anne and Folk Victorian would be considered more "refined". Nonetheless, our Southern Farmhouse style is rooted in these forms.

Farmhouses, of course, were fairly common on a farm, where one could sit on the wide porch and view the land. In the south, it's quite common to see farmland with acres and acres of crops and no trees, then find a cluster of mature trees around a house near the front of the property or the middle of the property - an oasis of shade. Having a wide shaded porch, fully stocked with rocking chairs and a pitcher of ice tea was a welcome respite from the heat and open sun. These large porches across the front, or even wrap-around porches became an essential element of comfort in the midst of hard times, a truly southern comfort.

Farmhouse serves to describe more the shape of the house with the porch than the ornament of the house or elements on the porch. Farmhouses in the North and West tend to be more void of ornament, and Farmhouses in the Southeast tend to have more wrap-around porches and also ornament added to them. Ornament can also be an element of traditional vs. modernism, where more traditional types have more ornament, and more modern types tend to focus more on simplicity and lack of ornament. Elements like column brackets, spindlework, gable brackets, barge board brackets, and even shutters all have varying degrees of appropriate ornament that can be used to create the perfect farmhouse for each.



SOUTHERN FARMHOUSE

Key Elements of style

1. One-story porch, either across front or wrapping around the side.
2. Simple broad roof form with side gables.
3. Gable front element often accompanied by porch to the side.
4. The use of side wings and porches are added to make more complex shapes.
5. Most frequently timber or box type columns. Rarely turned columns.
6. Multi-pane windows that are most commonly 2 over 1, or 2 over 2. Other options are also seen on more refined types.



SOUTHERN FARMHOUSE

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Farmhouse Massing

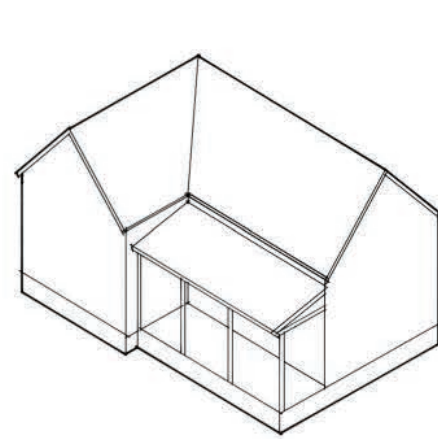
The Southern Farmhouse starts with a simple box form with additive features of porches and side wings. The porches are most commonly one-story, but the main body of the house can be either one or two-story.

More vernacular versions of the broad front mass have very simple detailing of the side gables. Front facing gables or the gable form are descendants of the Greek Revival Style so popular from 1830-1850. One-story homes with porches were more common in the Southeast during this time, but with construction techniques changing very rapidly, the two-story home gained popularity. One-story, more narrow shotgun forms were more frequent in the Southern states as well. Hence, the popularity of the front gable form.

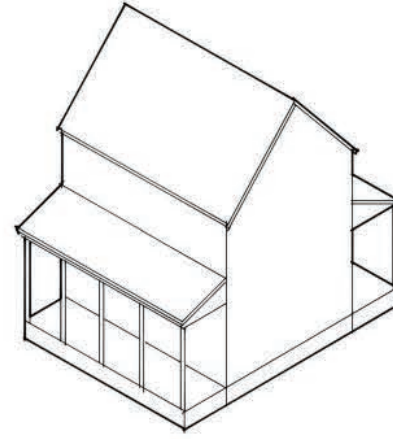
Roof pitches tend to be more steep, ranging between 7/12 and 12/12 for the main body of the house and much shallower pitches for the porches, usually between 2/12 and 5/12. Side gables should match the pitch of the main roof. Hipped or gable roofs are suitable for the main body roof, but less frequent.

Porches are essential to the style, whether a full length front porch, or porch adjacent to the front gable form (most common). One-story side wings are less commonly paired with two story front gables - typically the house is either a one-story or a two-story and not often mixed, and it's quite common to see front porches wrapping the corners of the main body to engage the side wings.

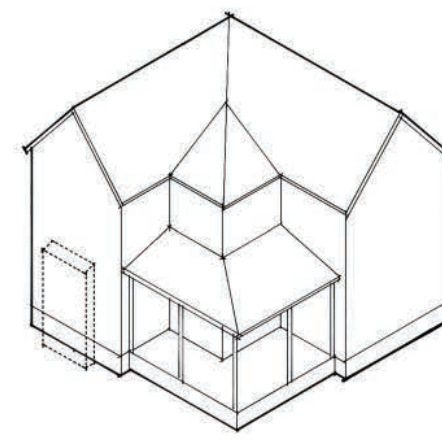
Larger living areas can take advantage of side wings. Gabled dormers are more common if present. The architectural character of the attached parts should match that of the main body. The main floor is typically 34"-40" above grade around the house. The first floor ceiling height is typically 10 - 12 feet, and the second floor ceiling height is commonly 9 feet, although many modern houses use 10 feet for both.



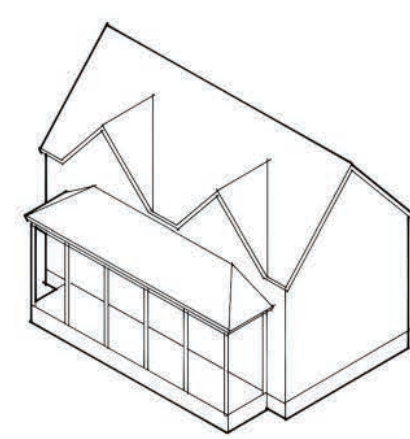
*One-Story Gable Front & Wing
Most Common
Main Body 30'-40' wide max.*



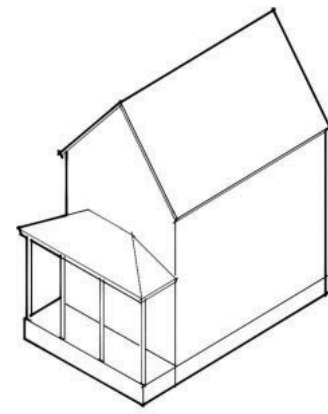
*Broad Roof w/Full Porch
4 or 5 Bay
Main Body 30'-40' wide max.*



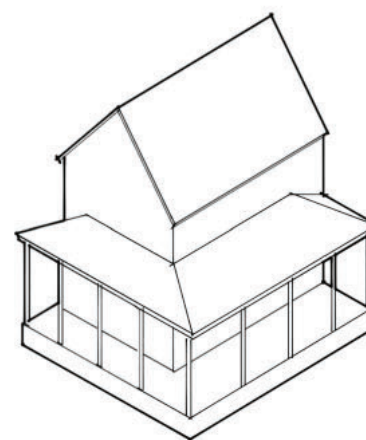
*Gable Front & Wing
32' - 40' wide*



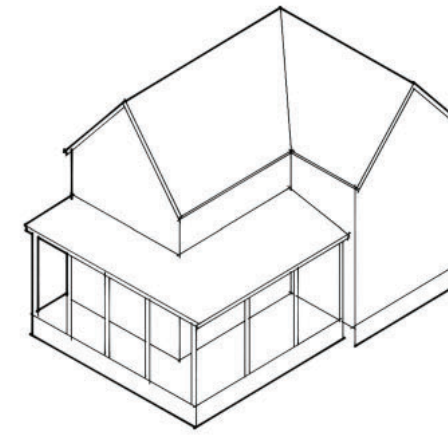
*Broad Roof w/Double Gable Front
30'-40' wide*



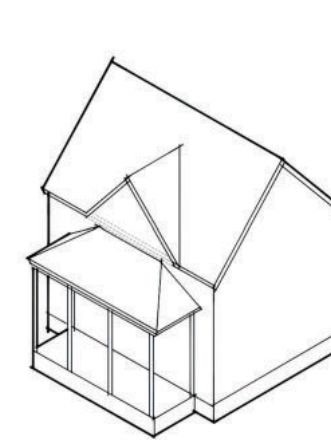
*Gable Front 3 Bay Very Common
Typically 3 Bay
18' - 24' wide*



*Gable Front w/Wrap-Around Porch
28' - 34' wide*



*Gable Front & Wing
28' - 40' wide*



*Broad Roof w/Gable Front
Typically 3 Bay
28' - 34' wide*



Southern Farmhouse

The Southern Farmhouse is a most-loved style for its feeling of comfort and Southern Charm.

The first floor expansive porches add great character and charm. "Farmhouse" serves to describe more the shape of the house with the porch than the ornament of the house or elements on the porch. Farmhouses in the North and West tend to be more void or ornament, and Farmhouses in the Southeast tend to have more wrap-around porches and also ornament added to them.



Farmhouse Elements



Farmhouse Elements

Columns:
Typically square timber or Box type columns. Timber columns range from 4" - 8" and box type columns are not greater than 10". 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 most often square wood but can also include turned or decorative pattern.

Farmhouse Column Types

Columns are most often full height but occasionally on a raised base. Columns are more commonly square timbers and chamfered, and only more classic round or turned on more refined examples. Brackets, single or paired, often sit atop columns. Farmhouses have a wide variety of ornament, based on whimsy or local tradition.

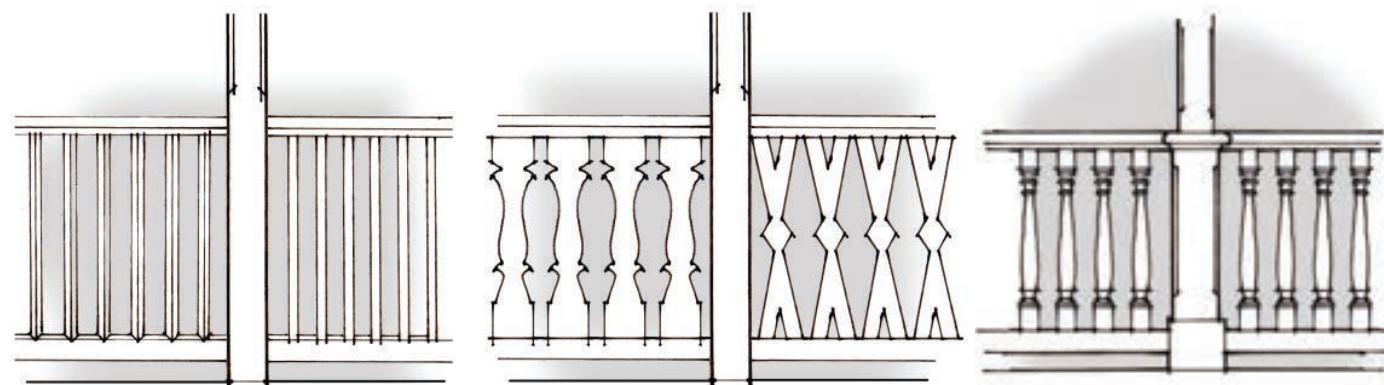
Farmhouse forms are fairly simple, with added porches and wings to provide more complexity.

Minimum depth of front porch is 8 feet. Porches are run the length of the facade or asymmetrical in their placement adjacent to a front gable form. Porches can extend beyond the main body of the house and wrap the side.

Porches are frame construction set up on masonry piers, rarely concrete and brick pavers except in the most refined types. It is preferred that the space between piers be filled in appropriately.

Columns have a regular spacing of 6 to 10 feet, with a square to vertical proportion (vertical preferred). Farmhouse columns are more slender than you would initially think, and in some cases doubled for ornament effect.

Porch eaves can be either open rafters or flush with the porch beam.



Rotated or Straight Square Balluster - Most Common

Decorative Plank Balluster - Less Common
Victorian influence

Turned Balluster - Less Common
Classic or Victorian influence

Handrails are always contoured. Decorative Ballusters vary greatly and are often only present with other ornamental elements like brackets.

Farmhouse Railing Types

Farmhouse Variations & Inspirations



photograph by Steve Mouzon



Farmhouse

Wall Materials: Smooth finish wood or fiber cement lap siding with 5" max. 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, 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 7/8" true or simulated divided lites.

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



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