

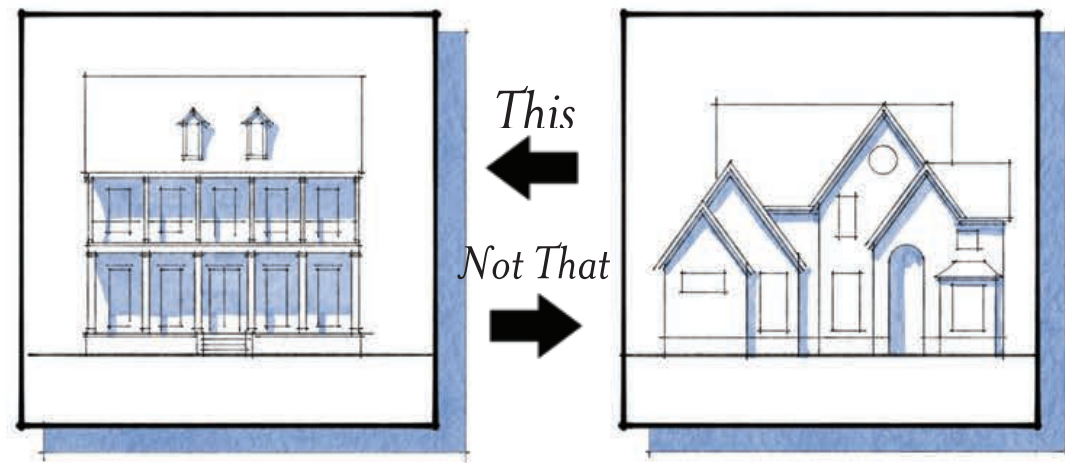
THIS , NOT THAT

General Guidelines for Building a Traditional House

These simple guidelines will solve 80% of the troubling issues with most designs. By far, these are the typical design flaws seen on most contemporary construction sites and suburban house designs. These are the elements that are the heartbeat of traditional home construction.

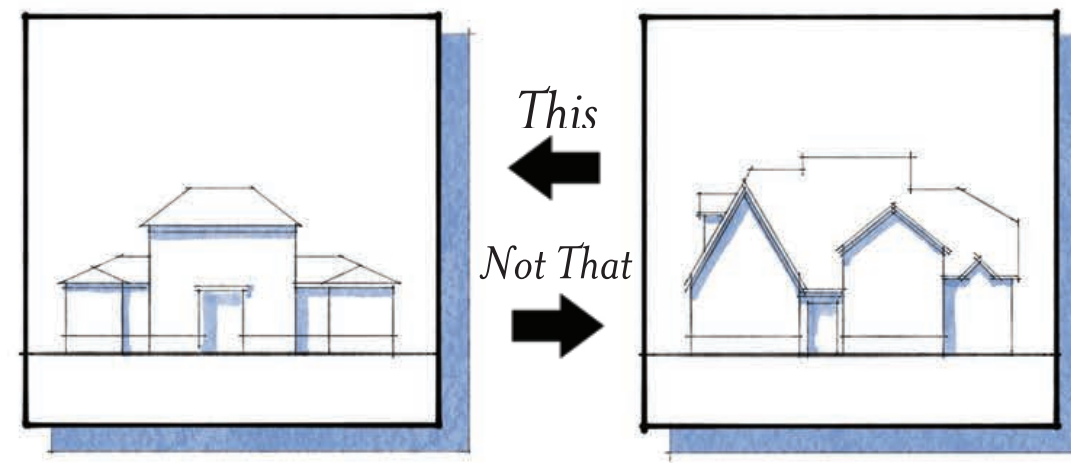
The other 20% should be addressed by the style you've chosen for your home. In our review of architectural designs, these are the issues we will look for first. If these issues are resolved in your design, then we merely have to tackle the overall styling of your house and play by the pattern book rules for that style.

This, Not That (simple design guidelines for traditional construction)



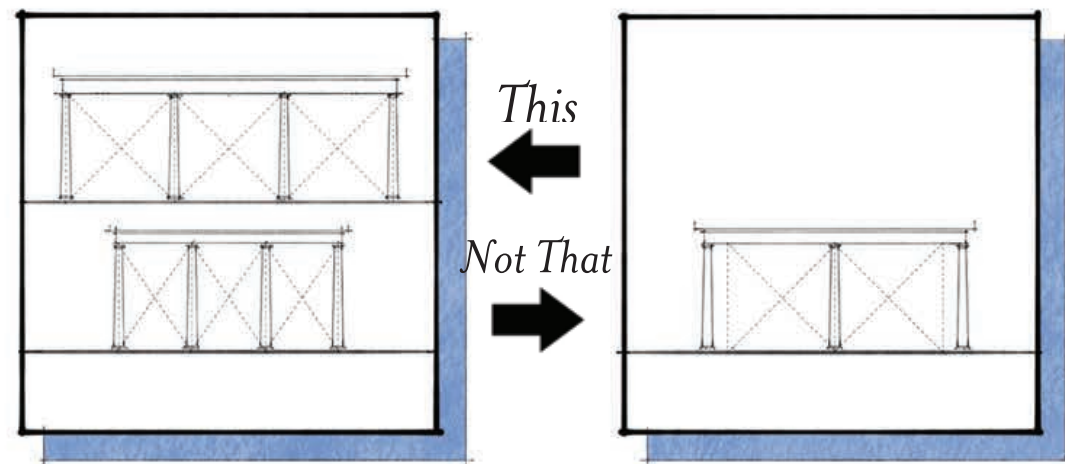
Simplicity of Form

Traditional designs are simple in their shape and construction. Their elegance and timelessness are by-products of their simple and straightforward approach. As you design, work to simplify the massing, roof, and window placement on your house.



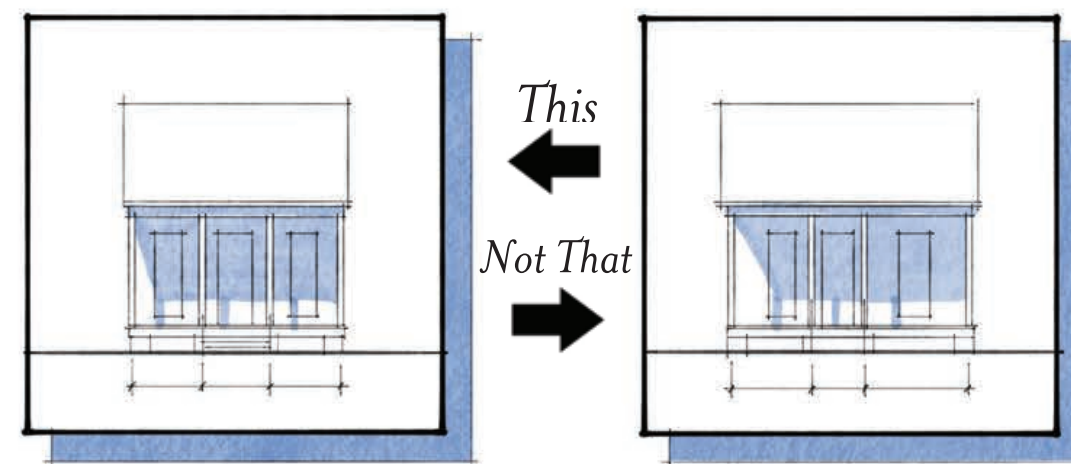
Simplify Roof Pitches

Roof shapes can be one of the most costly elements to a home. Simplifying the roof shapes means simplifying the walls as well. As you design, work to keep the roof shapes simple and all the same pitch. Design all gables, or all hips. Of course, this is subject to the style you choose, but in general, keeping the pitches and type the same will make your house look more traditional and keep cost down as well.



Main Body Massing

The picture on the left has classical massing and detailing – the porch element works together with a projection in plan to create a more classical front and hierarchy of the entry. The picture on the right is a house with some similar elements, but due to lack of properly massing the overall form and lack of hierarchy, it comes off like a ranch style house.

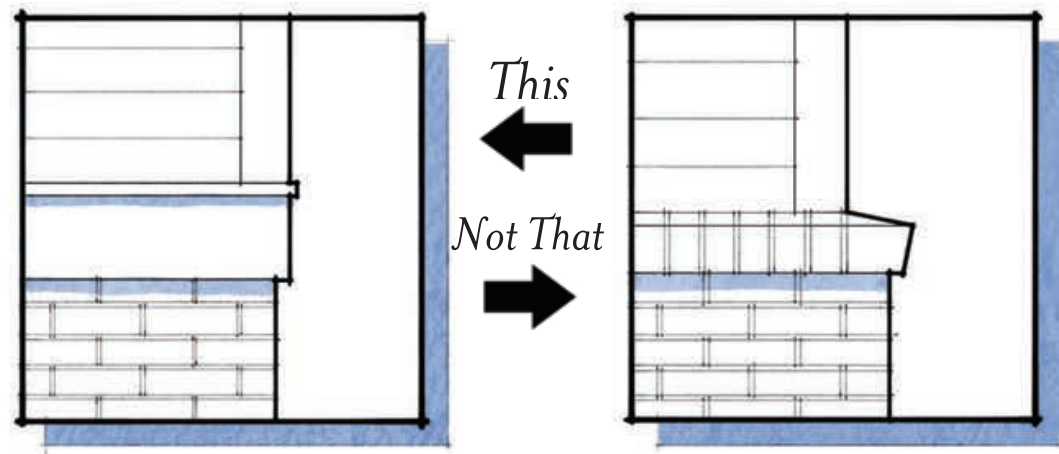


Regular Column Spacing

Intercolumniation is the regular spacing of columns. As you design, work to keep the column spacing all the same. Don't vary the spacing based on window placement or door placement. Set the column spacing first, then work to align windows and doors within that spacing. In a few styles, such as Greek Revival, there is a precedent to pair columns together, but the overall spacing of those pairs still remains regulated.

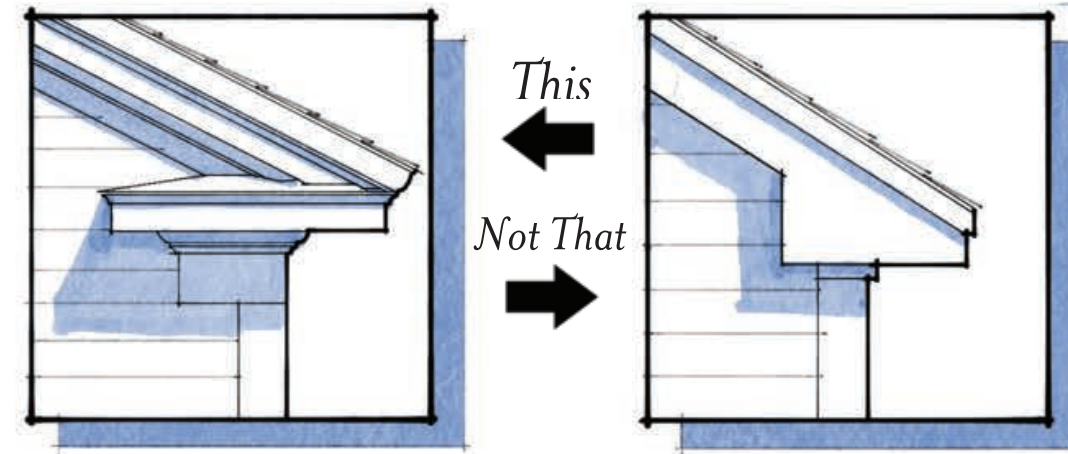


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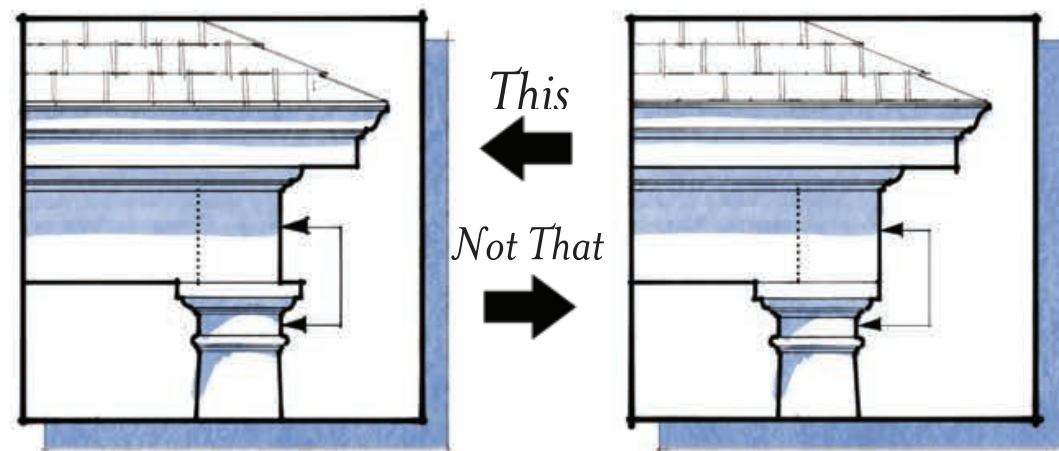
Brick Base / Frame Wall

The face of the exterior stud wall should align with the face of brick or masonry foundation wall below. Traditionally, this was done because the masonry foundation wall was structural. Transitioning from siding to brick with a brick watertable only highlights the fact that the brick is a veneer. As you design, be careful to align the face of stud with face of brick below, then utilize a drip cap and skirt board at the base of the siding to make the transition, whether at the first floor or second floor transition.



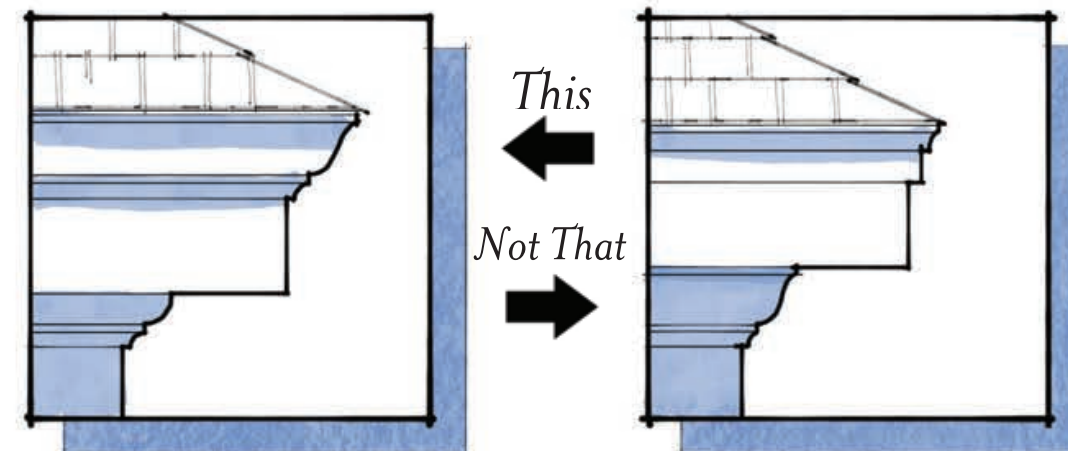
Return Eave

A very common contemporary way to build an eave is depicted on the right – called a “pork chop eave.” As you design, the fascia should return around the corner and to the house wall. The raking cornice should be in the same plan and die into the return fascia cleanly. The eave cap on the return should be metal, usually at a slope of 1:12, but no greater than 2:12. The Cyma, or crown mould, should either return on the raking cornice using a split fillet.... OR....let the crown mould return on the lower eave return and have the raking crown die into the lower (poor man’s cornice).



Column / Beam Alignment

As you design, always align both faces of the beam or entablature and the top of the column shaft. Allow the capital to extend beyond the face of the beam. This is a simple rule that must always be followed for traditional design. Even with the use of timber columns, set a timber beam on a timber column and the faces will align naturally. The capital trim can be added while standing in place. The only place we find any variation on this is in a vernacular detailing of Acadian houses where the timber beams resting on first floor large columns are more narrow than the column shaft and the alignment is kept on the front face, but not on the back face.

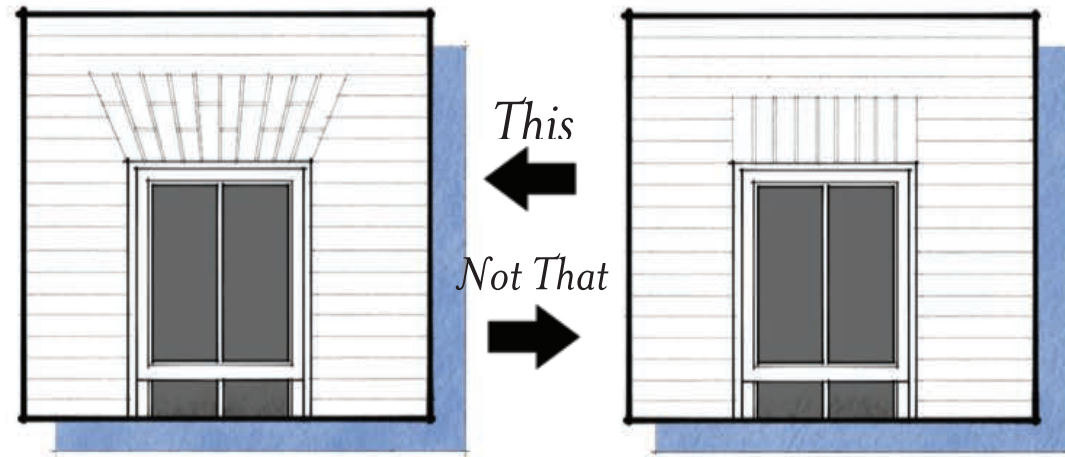


Crown Moulding

As you design, always put the crown moulding as the crown of the entablature – at the very top. Crown moulding does not belong under the soffit/eave. Crown is for the head. Bed moulding, however, should be located in its proper supporting location – under the soffit/eave. In general, Crown mouldings have a shape that curves outward at the top, and supporting mouldings, or bed mouldings, have a shape that curves upward at the top.

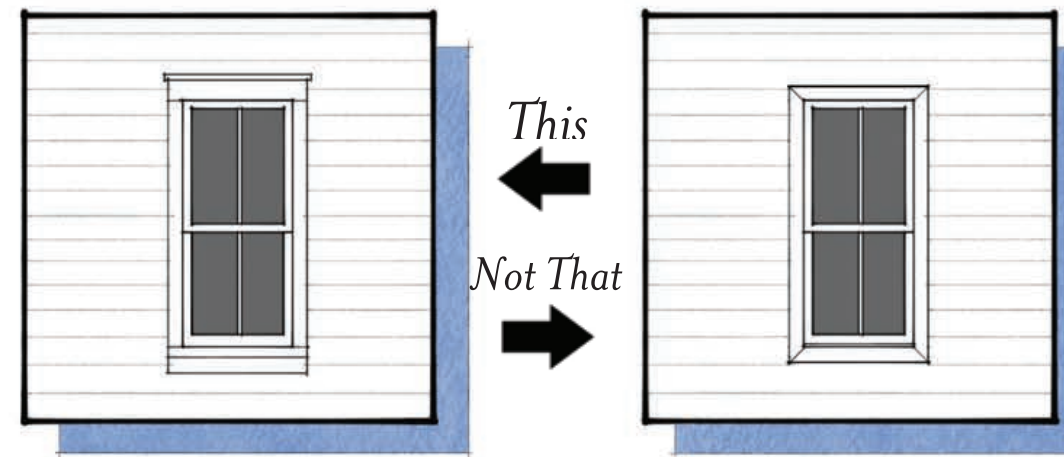


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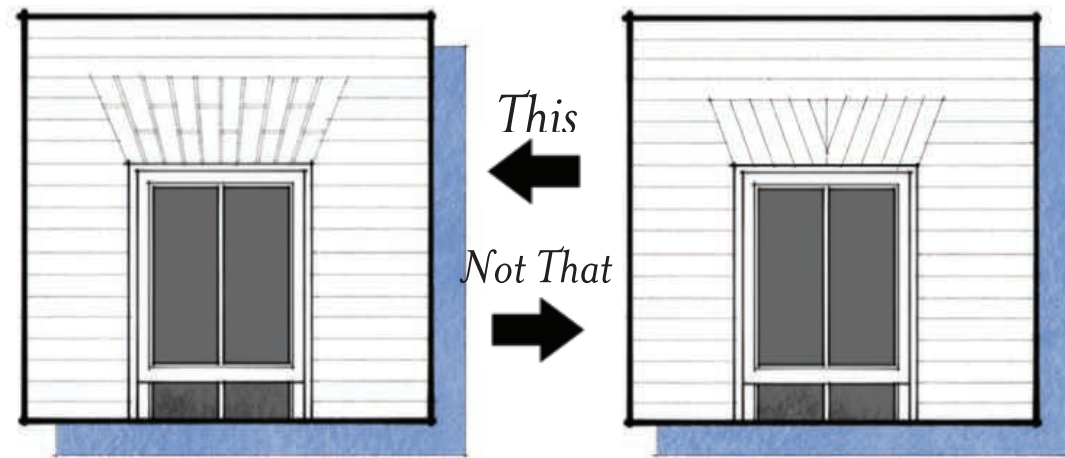
True Jack Arch

Traditionally Jack Arches were used to span across an opening. They are self supporting because each brick is wedge shaped to carry the load. Today, most builders use steel lintels because the code requires them in certain areas. If code allows, work to design true Jack Arches using wedge shaped masonry units. Even if you use a steel lintel, fake the structural support with a true Jack Arch and not use a soldier course. Use an 8" Jack Arch for openings up to 40" wide, and 12" Jack Arch for openings up to 60". Wider openings may require the use of a triple rowlock arch.



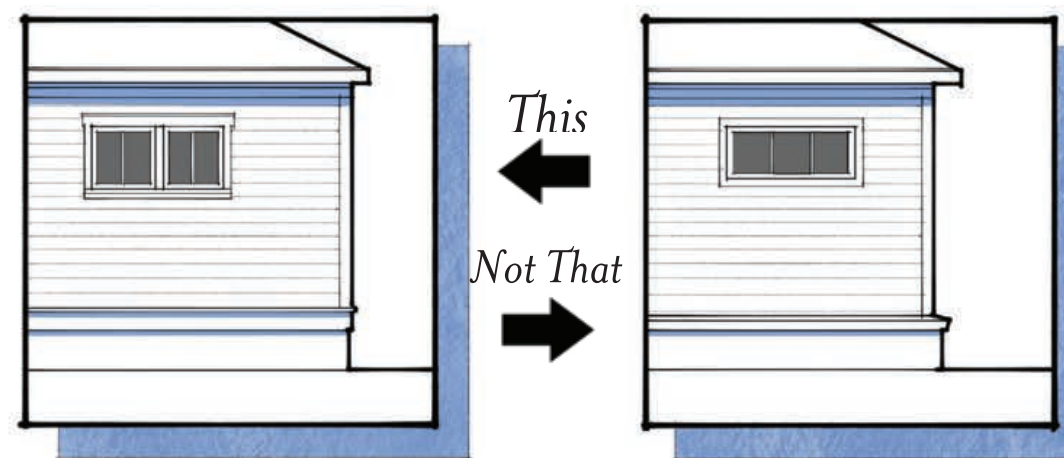
Window Casings

As you design, use all the elements of a traditionally cased window: Drip cap, head, jamb, sill, and apron. All casings should be 5/4" thick and not 3/4" thick. Window casings should not be "picture framed". The Head casing should typically be taller than the Jamb casing width. Jamb casing should sit on a window sill that extends to the edge or slightly beyond. The Apron is optional depending on the style of the house.



True Jack Arch

Improper cutting of the brick for a Jack Arch just looks bad. It looks like a mistake and looks like the builder didn't know what they were doing. Either use actual wedge shaped brick from the brick company, or take the time to actually cut each brick in a wedge to create the Jack Arch. The brick are layed in a fan-like order so that the mortar joints all point to one center point.

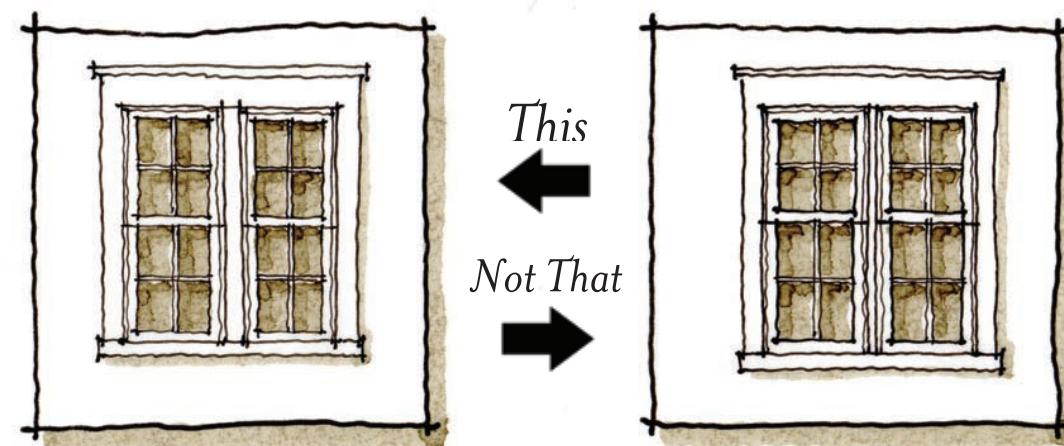
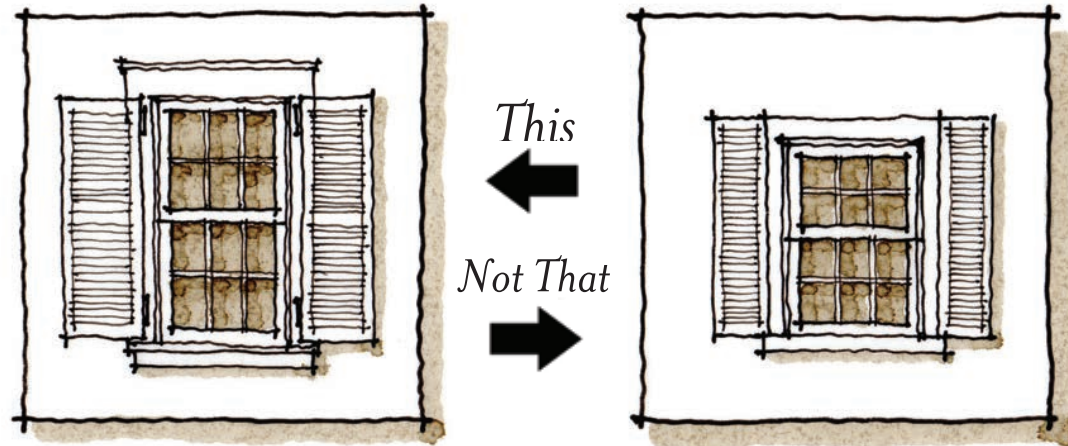


Window Proportions

When you design smaller windows, use vertically or square proportioned window units instead of transom units. This situation normally occurs above a kitchen sink, above a toilet, or above a tub. It's strongly encouraged to use larger windows, with vertically proportioned window panes even in those areas.



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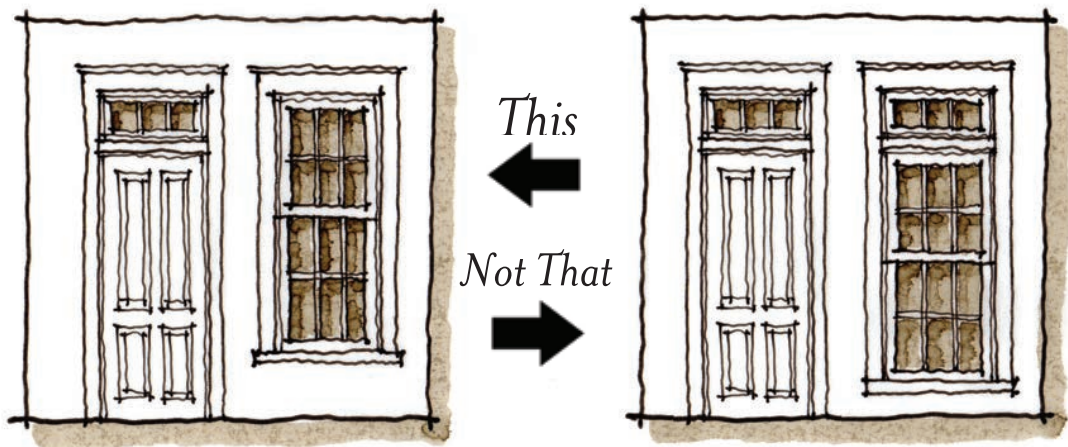


Window Proportions

The overall window frame should be of vertical proportion, or at the very least, square proportion. The window panes should each be of vertical proportion as well. As you compose your elevations, design taller, vertically proportioned windows should always occur in the lower floor(s), while placing the shorter, or more squarely proportioned windows on the upper floor(s). Once you've selected your architectural style, consult the window proportions for that style more closely.

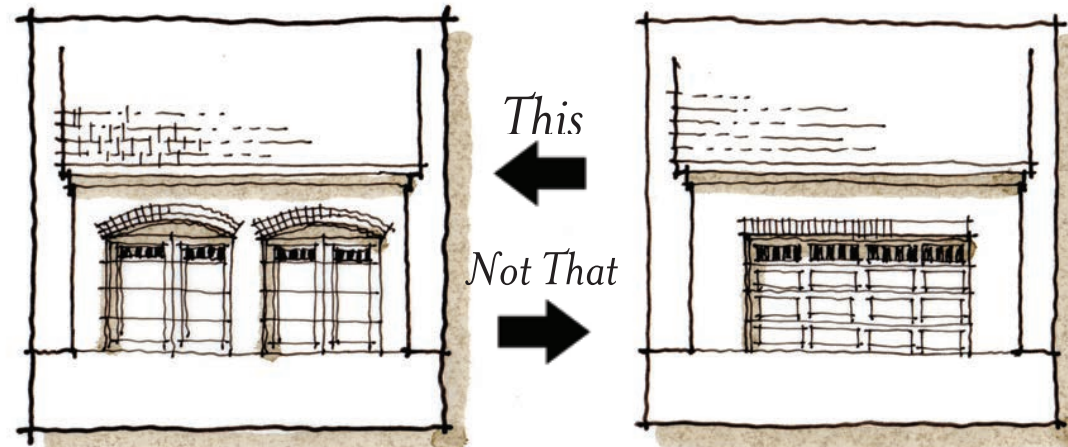
Window Mullions

Traditional window openings were framed individually. As you design, work to place (2) 2x4 studs between ganged windows. For installations in siding, all casings should be 5/4" thick. Jamb casings should be at least 3 1/2". Head casing should at least match the jamb or slightly larger. The mullion casing board should be at least 3 1/2" wide.



Transoms

Traditionally, transoms were only used over doors to give hierarchy and importance to the entrance. In recent years, they have come to be used over windows and even by themselves for small windows. As you design, work to follow the style architecture you've chosen and only place transoms over doors. It's not important that the window head and door/transom head align. Quite often, the entrance door with transom was taller than the adjacent windows. The only exception to this rule is when ganging a series of doors and windows with transoms over all.



Garage Door Heads

Single garage doors, maximum of 9', are required on every garage except on townhouse or live/work units where lot widths are 24 feet or less. Double garage doors often sag over time. Single garage doors can easily be made to look like carriage doors.

Nine foot openings are too wide for jack arches, so as you design, create triple rowlock arches over single garage doors. Work to leave at least 3 brick courses between the top of the arches and the frieze board.



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