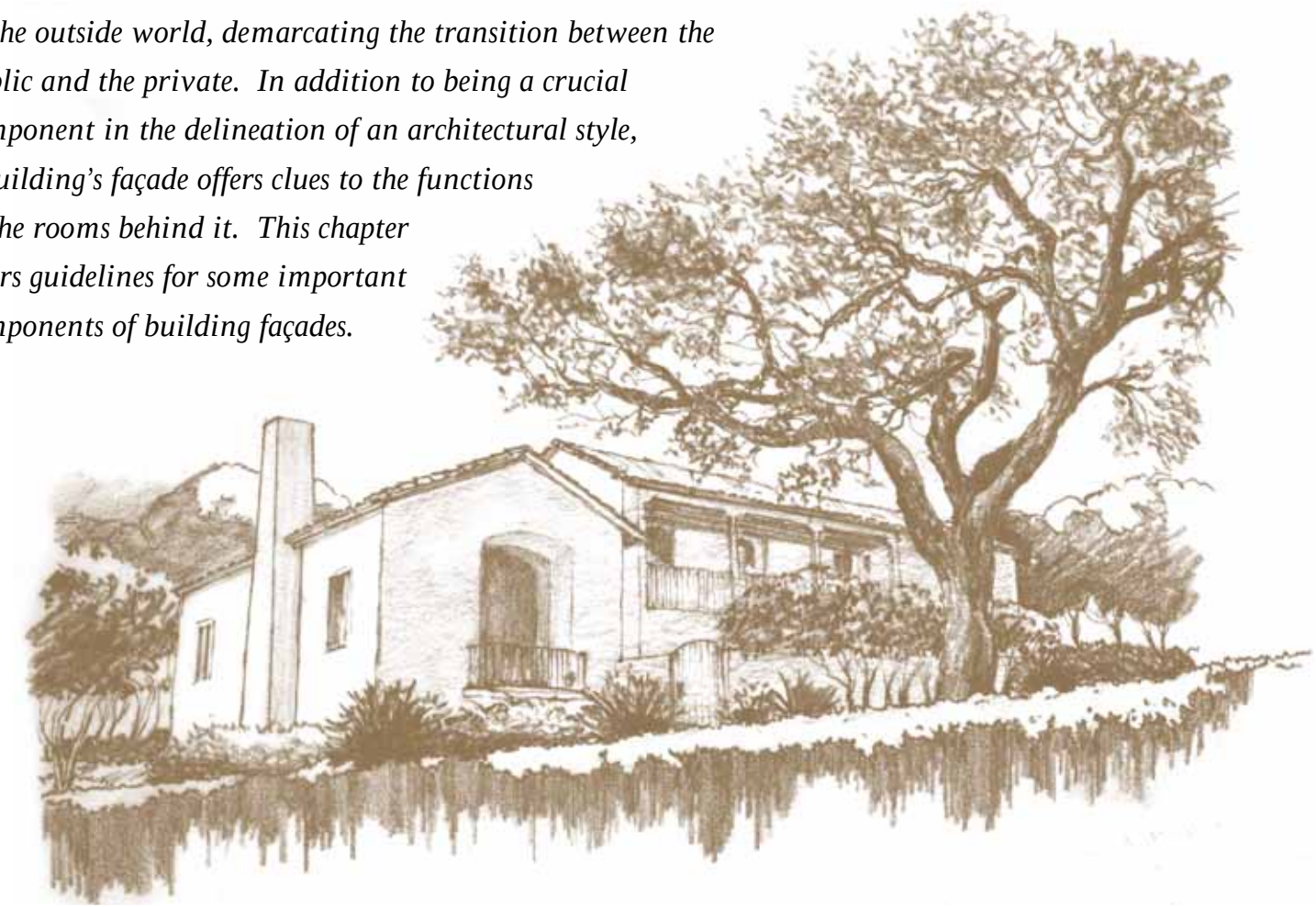
The façade of a building is the countenance that a home offers to the outside world, demarcating the transition between the public and the private. In addition to being a crucial component in the delineation of an architectural style, a building's façade offers clues to the functions of the rooms behind it. This chapter offers guidelines for some important components of building façades.

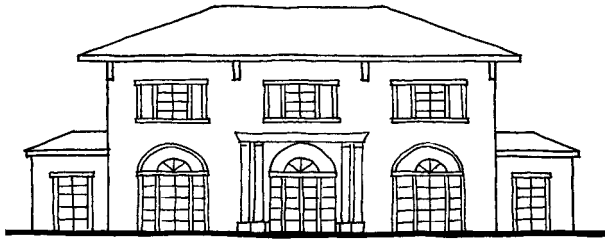


A. Composition

The composition of all façades of a building shall follow the principles of an architectural style.

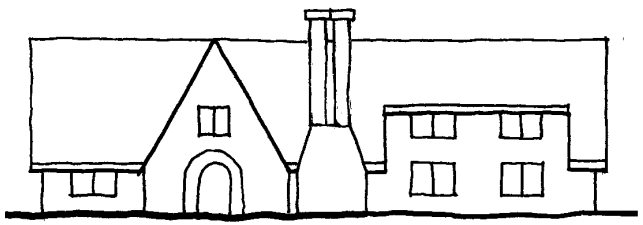
The balance and placement of openings on a façade should communicate the building floor plan and the structural logic of the building.

Asymmetrical façade massing



Symmetrical façade massing

The height of a façade and its proportional relationship to the roof are principle components of an architectural style. The façade and roof form should communicate the style of the building.



Tudor Style, with tall, high-pitched roof

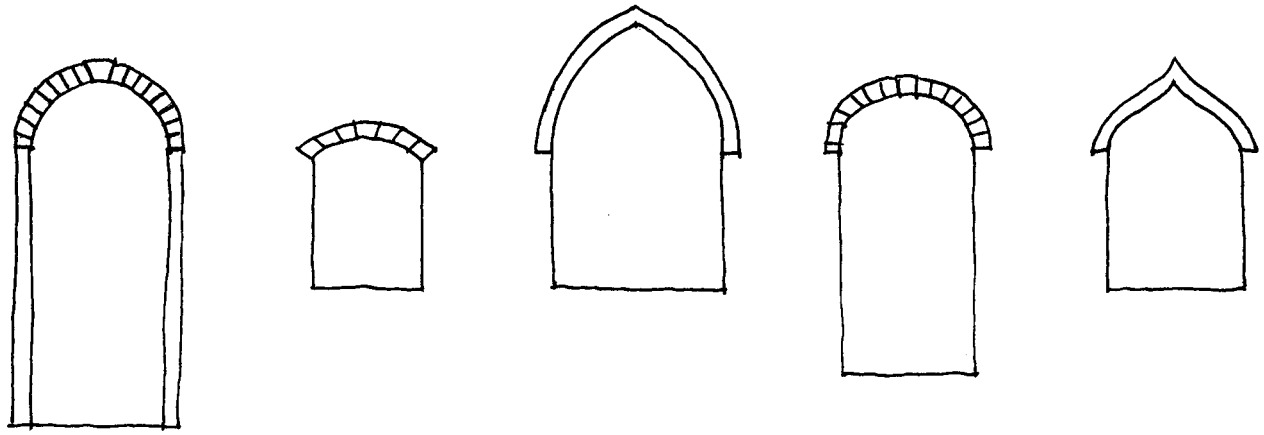
Ranch Style, with horizontal emphasis

"Composition is the ability to join the parts of a building in order to produce a harmonious whole. It means that the work of art must have a beginning, a middle, and an end."

The Golden City

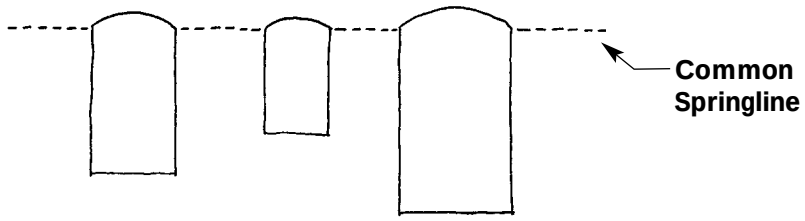
B. Arches

Arched doors, windows or façade openings are used in many architectural styles. A careful study of the style will determine the arch shape and proportion that is appropriate, a few of which are shown below.

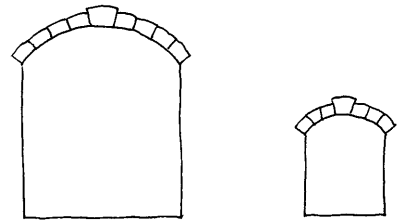


Round **Segmental** **Pointed, or Gothic arch** **Elliptical** **Tudor, or flattened Gothic**

There are a number of techniques that should be followed to ensure the proper placement of arched openings on a façade, including a common springline for the arches and identical ratios for arched openings of differing sizes.



Careful study of an architectural style will facilitate the appropriate use and arrangement of arched openings on a building's façade. The use of arches should not be overdone.

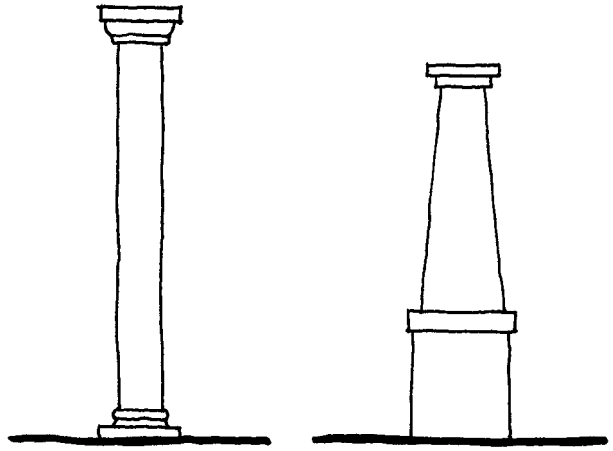


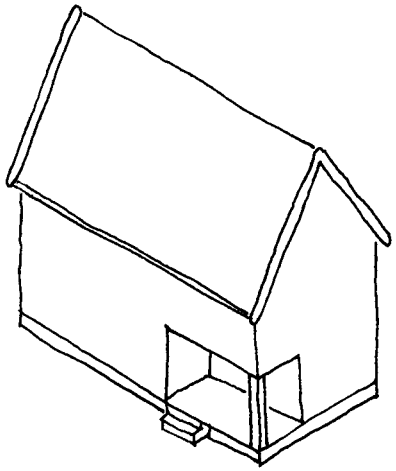
Identical Ratios

C. Columns

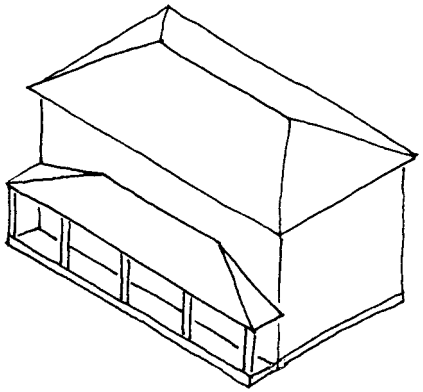
Columns are placed on the facades of buildings usually as the means to support the roof of a porch. Columns have a number of properties that should be true to the architectural style of the building. These include:

- Height and width
- Column base
- Column top, or capital
- The proportion of all of these elements together





Inset Porch



Porch External to Primary Massing

D. Porches

A porch is a transitional space on the building façade between the external and internal environments of the home. It is useful to consider that, although the porch is a significant feature of many architectural styles, its roots in American architecture are in places with very different weather conditions than California's Mediterranean climate. It is a semi-private space that is essentially outdoors yet offers shelter from the elements.

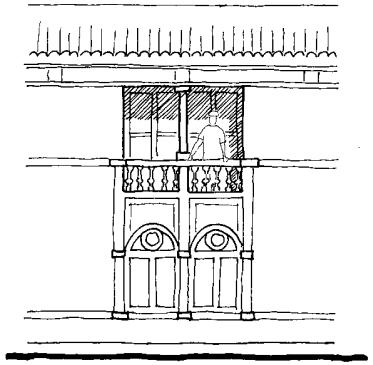
Porches are primarily of two forms. They are either inset into the primary mass of a building or built outside the main building as a separate volume that helps mediate the building mass consistent with the building's architectural style.

Porches should follow basic principles of an architectural style, which will determine:

- An inset porch or external to primary massing
- Horizontal percentage of façade covered
- Roof form over the porch

E. Railings

The use of railings on porches, balconies and upper level windows or door openings should be carefully considered as a component of an architectural style. When properly applied, well designed and properly detailed railings are an opportunity to reinforce specific characteristics of the selected architectural style. The materials used for railings should be part of an appropriate palette of materials for the architectural style of the building.

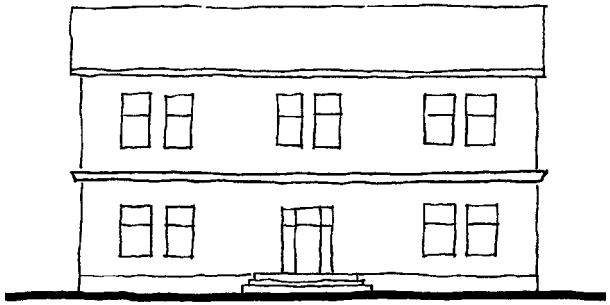


F. Decorative Elements

There are a number of elements that can be used to communicate design style. These elements should be used as appropriate to a specific style.

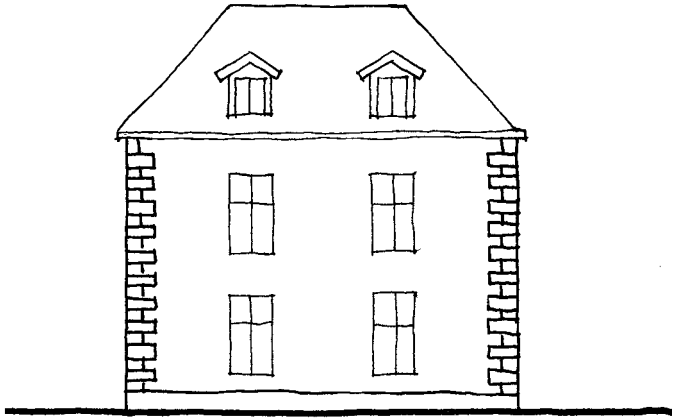
1. Pilasters

Pilasters are vertical components of a façade that can be structural or applied to the façade. They can help to communicate a specific design style and can break a façade into smaller components. Pilasters do not belong on many styles and should not be artificially applied.



2. Belt Course

A belt course, or horizontal band, delineates the first floor of a building from the upper floor(s). It can be the transition line between differing façade materials. The presence of a belt course, as well as its detailing, is specific to certain architectural styles.



3. Quoins

Quoins accentuate the corners of buildings or the protruding elements of buildings and are specific to a number of architectural styles. They are frequently misused either as an indicator of value rather than an historically appropriate element of an architectural style, or insufficiently proportioned and detailed.