



A Pattern Book for Neighborly Houses

Details and techniques for building and renovating neighborly houses

U.S. Area Office of Habitat for Humanity International and
the Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America

To Habitat for Humanity Affiliates:

As you well know, Habitat for Humanity is dedicated to providing decent, affordable homes in partnership with those in need. Through the work of Habitat, thousands of low-income families have found new hope in the form of secure housing, endowing them with stability for their children; an improved sense of dignity; greater health, safety, and security; and increased educational and job prospects.

Each house built has two roles: to provide adequate shelter and to become part of a neighborhood. The most critical part of house design, in terms of responsibility to a community, is the exterior architectural character. Exterior architectural character speaks to the neighborhood — to all those who pass by as well as those who enter inside the house. In joining with the Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America to create *A Pattern Book for Neighborly Houses*, we hope to equip Habitat affiliates with a new resource to help them design homes that fit within the context of both local communities and architectural traditions.

This Pattern Book follows the tradition of American town building by providing practical tools and resources for Habitat Affiliates and volunteers. Pattern books have been in use since ancient Roman times, and the British brought the idea to the American colonies, where pattern books remained a common building tool through the first half of the 20th century. These design guidelines offer general direction for architectural details, materials, shapes, site plans, and landscape elements.

We urge Habitat affiliates and volunteers to make use of this unique tool, and we wish to thank and acknowledge the many participants who contributed to the preparation of this document. *A Pattern Book for Neighborly Houses* will help to ensure that Habitat projects add to the character and tradition of neighborhoods across the country.

Yours in Partnership,



STEPHEN SEIDEL

Director, Field Operations

HFHI US Area Office

October, 2007

Habitat's Mission and the Increased Emphasis on Design

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The Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America and the U.S. Area Office of Habitat for Humanity International have embarked upon a national collaboration, with architects selected jointly by the ICA & CA and Habitat, to design Habitat homes that fit within the context of both local communities and regional architectural traditions.

More than building new affordable houses, Habitat for Humanity International's mission is to help people build new lives. The strength of our democracy is based on individual economic achievement and social mobility. Traditional American neighborhoods provided a range of types and cost of housing, all within a walking distance of daily services, schools, and churches. This mix provided role models for success that served to inspire young people. It ensured the long term stability of the community by providing life-long housing options for people: small inexpensive housing for those beginning their careers, larger family houses when children come along, smaller urban housing for empty nesters, and assisted living for the elderly. Studies have demonstrated that over time the social capital created in such neighborhoods is a key in community stability and the health of its residents.

Each house built has two roles: one to provide adequate shelter and the other to become part of a neighborhood. The architectural character of the exterior of the house is the most critical part of its design in fulfilling its responsibility to the community.

Development practices over the course of the last 60 years have eroded, and in some places obliterated, this great American tradition. Instead of building mixed-income neighborhoods, we have built single-income subdivisions isolated from each other. While nobly motivated, much of the low-cost housing built in many communities has been clearly identifiable as different from other housing. Public housing projects may be the most obvious example. And as Habitat affiliates increase their production, the challenge of striking the balance between building simple, decent homes and designing homes to fit the fabric of the surrounding neighborhood intensifies. Communities may resist the construction of housing that doesn't match the existing neighborhood style because they fear for their property values.

Therefore, the goal of this Pattern Book is to provide both an operating manual and prototype house designs that will enable Habitat for Humanity affiliates to design houses that build strong neighborhoods as well as affordable accommodations for the future homeowner.



Overview of the Pattern Book

This Pattern Book is organized into six sections: Overview, Neighborhood Patterns, Housing Patterns, Architectural Patterns, Landscape Patterns, and Application. Each section provides specific information and design patterns to assist in the planning of a Neighborly Habitat House.

The Overview describes the qualities of a neighborly house, suggests a means of adapting basic house types to fit in with their neighbors, and contains instructions on how to use the Pattern Book.

The Neighborhood Patterns section introduces the characteristics that make up all neighborhoods, forming patterns and a unique identity for each place. It presents a series of illustrations that describe the way that individual houses fit into those patterns and at the same time help to define them.

The Housing Patterns section introduces Neighborly Habitat House Types, following the idea that different types of housing work in different neighborhoods. This section provides criteria for how to

choose the most appropriate house type and the elements of each type. In addition, global issues such as green building, accessibility, and parking are presented.

The Architectural Patterns section presents guidelines for building houses within a specific architectural vocabulary. Four primary architectural traditions found throughout the United States are illustrated with key details, materials, and shapes to guide the transformation of existing designs and the design of new houses.

The Landscape Patterns section illustrates specific examples of fencing, walls, paving, and garden types found in traditional American neighborhoods.

The Application section illustrates a variety of house plans and elevations prepared by architects as well as a list of material resources, reference materials, and a glossary. Examples of step-by-step design transformations are also provided.



Neighborhood Patterns



Architectural Patterns



Landscape Patterns

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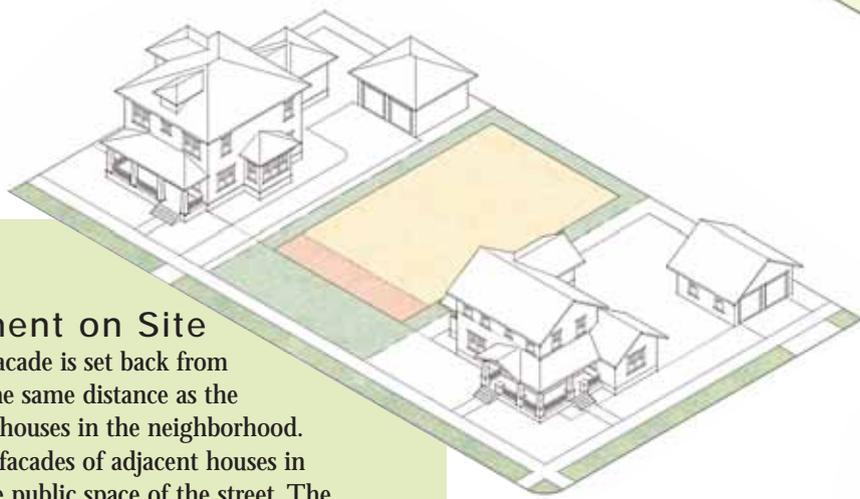


A Neighborly House

National surveys indicate that the vast majority of Americans are comfortable with affordable housing if it “fits in” the neighborhood. If efficient floor plans and basic massing are utilized (in keeping with Habitat’s guidelines for cost-effective housing), it is possible within a very limited budget to create the detail and character needed for a house to be viewed as a “neighborly house” rather than just an “affordable house.” The house illustrated below accomplishes this, utilizing the recommendations detailed in this Pattern Book.

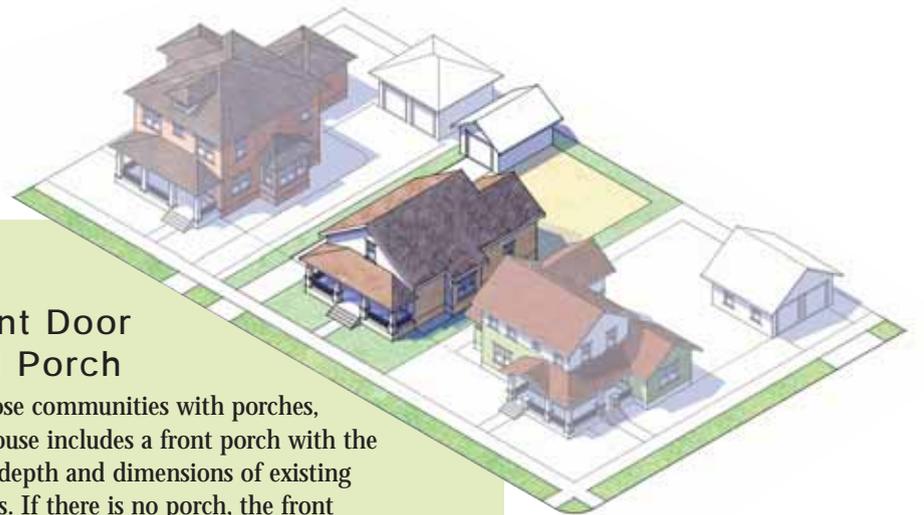
The Neighborly Habitat House

The result is a Neighborly Habitat House that is in harmony with its neighborhood and an asset for the community.



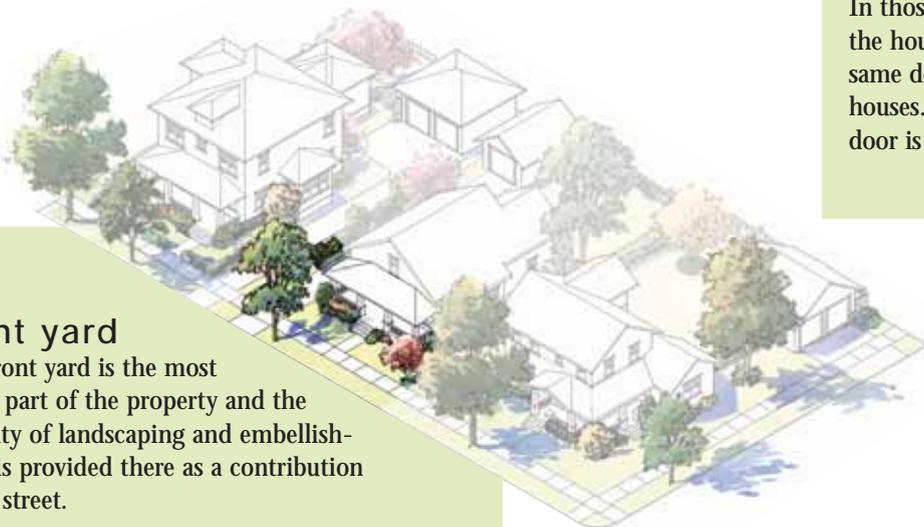
Placement on Site

The front facade is set back from the street the same distance as the majority of houses in the neighborhood. It joins the facades of adjacent houses in defining the public space of the street. The front door of the house is on the facade facing the street.



Front Door and Porch

In those communities with porches, the house includes a front porch with the same depth and dimensions of existing houses. If there is no porch, the front door is embellished.



Front yard

The front yard is the most public part of the property and the majority of landscaping and embellishment is provided there as a contribution to the street.

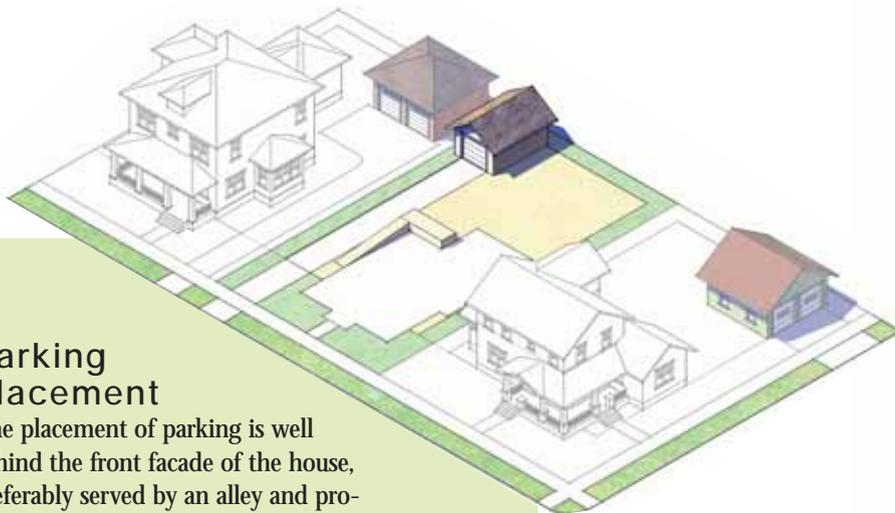


Architectural Character

The front facade, including the porch, is the most ornamented and finished part of a Neighborly Habitat House. The facade contributes most significantly to the public space: the sidewalk and street.

The house has a recognizable architectural style that is found elsewhere in the community and is recognized as an expression of local tradition.

The most basic house can be modified with minimum effort. Using correct proportions and standard elements, such as columns, that are correctly sized can make the difference between a house that fits and one that does not.



Parking Placement

The placement of parking is well behind the front facade of the house, preferably served by an alley and providing an accessible route to the house.

Accessibility

A house's accessibility should be considered at the beginning of the design process. Ramps and accessible walks are an integral part of the design of the house, as opposed to add ons. Due to careful design, the siting of the house illustrated provides a zero-step entry approach from its parking area.



Green Design

Green design techniques help to achieve an affordable house. In taking advantage of a house's site and green building techniques, Neighborly Habitat Houses promote energy efficiency and conservation in a way that helps to assure long-term affordability.

A

How To Use the Pattern Book

Step 1:

Identify Neighborhood Type and Character

To be sure that your house fits into its neighborhood, use the *Neighborhood Patterns* section, which outlines the characteristics found in all traditional neighborhoods. These characteristics form “patterns” while allowing for unique identity. They should be considered when picking appropriate building types and architectural character.



Step 2:

Identify Appropriate House Types

Select an appropriate house type from the *Housing Patterns* section. Refer to the *Neighborhood Patterns* section for how to place the house on the site.



Step 3:

Identify Appropriate Architectural Character

Four primary architectural styles found in the United States are documented in this Pattern Book: Classical and Colonial Revival, Victorian, Arts & Crafts, and Mission. These sections follow the structure outlined below:

Choose Architectural Style

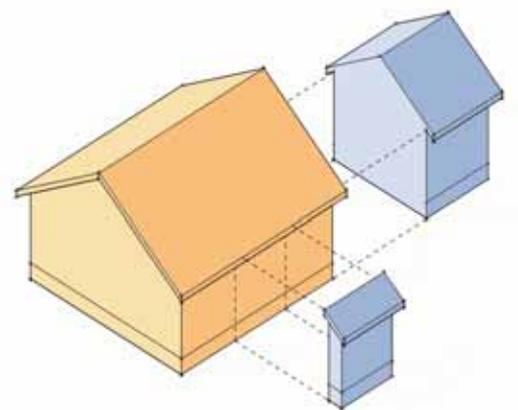
Choose an architectural style appropriate to the region and neighborhood you are in. You can determine which style is best suited for the house you are working on by observing the styles used in the surrounding neighborhood.

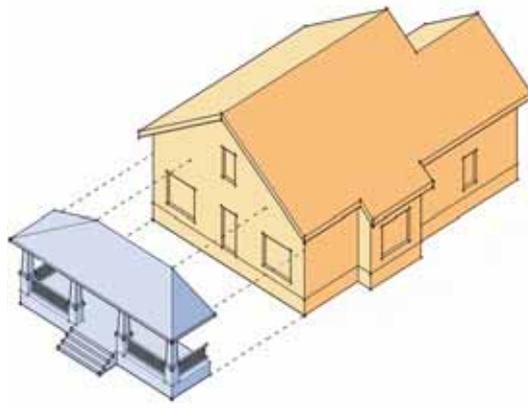


Choose Massing, Composition, and Materials

This page describes the basic massing types or shapes of houses found in the traditional precedents for each architectural style. Each massing type is shown as a three-dimensional image with corresponding elevation diagrams. The layout of rooms should be designed to fit into the massing types found within the particular style. The roof types are part of this overall massing description.

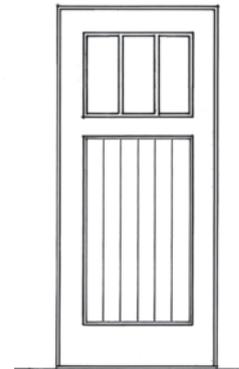
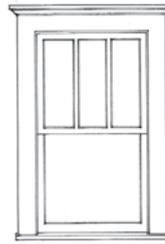
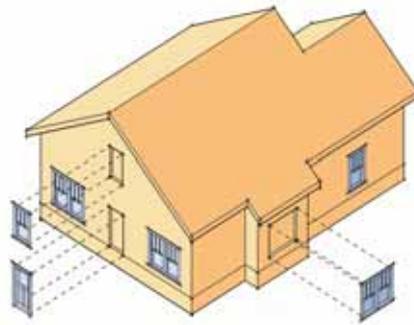
This section also includes a list of acceptable materials and their application.





Choose Eaves and Porches

Porches are essential elements of the character of many American neighborhoods. The location and design elements of porches are covered in the *Architectural Patterns* section. The massing of the front porch is specific to each house type and distinct within a particular style.



Choose Windows and Doors

The window and door spacing is related to both the shape and the style of the house. Typical window and door compositions are illustrated as part of the massing illustrations for each style. Typical window and door proportions, trim details, and special window or door elements are also illustrated.

Step 4:

Identify Appropriate Landscape

This section of the Pattern Book is intended to provide guidance for designers, volunteers, and homeowners regarding the private landscape elements found on individual lots within American neighborhoods.



Step 5:

Review the Material Manufacturers List in the Application section

Review the material manufacturers list in the *Application* section to find materials appropriate for the style.



Step 6:

Review the Resources List and Gallery of House Plans in the Application section

Review the application guidelines, including transformation and the gallery of plans. In addition, review the resource list for regional architects, historic background, technical assistance, and house design information.

