

# HISTORICAL CONCEPTS

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## Porch Revival

*Excerpts from Southern Accents, May-June 1996*



*Classical porches of a Beaufort, South Carolina development called Newpoint recapture the essence of the Southern neighborhood. Historical Concepts designs are seen throughout this traditional neighborhood development.*

**Article by Philip Morris**

**Photographs: Angela Seckinger**

Porches have always been as much about living as about architecture. Because of them, families restoring houses in the South's historic residential districts have discovered that a stroll down the sidewalk brings contact with neighbors - a ritual some have nicknamed "porching". Newpoint, a new Beaufort, SC, development with a sweep of porches fronting a waterfront area called the Green might easily be mistaken as one of those historic districts. These homes are a fine expression of a dual revival spreading across the region: the neotraditional neighborhood and the house-with-porch.

The trend is about architecture, but it is equally about streets, sidewalks, and parks - the human spaces that buildings frame. Though one street is lined with Charleston-style side-porch houses, the classical houses of Beaufort served as the primary inspiration. The Newpoint architectural code requires all houses to have porches extending a minimum of 40 percent of the front facade and be placed close to sidewalks, producing convivial streets. Simplicity of line and detail rule, but great attention is given to proportion and refinement.

"Sometimes, porches were later additions, but always an accommodation to the climate and patterns of living," says Jim Strickland of Historical Concepts, the firm that designed four of the eight houses facing the Green and numerous other houses throughout Newpoint. A porch softens a house and "gives it a feeling of informality even if the house is formal, like these are," says Strickland.

Last fall, Strickland was invited to dinner on the porch of one of the homes he designed. Furnished like a room, it is a full 14 feet deep. "There were about a dozen of us out on that porch watching people play a casual game of croquet on the Green with the river and Beaufort beyond," said Strickland. "I felt like I was a part of history."

Click on any of the images below to enlarge.

