



Shuttered Window,  
Sainte, France.

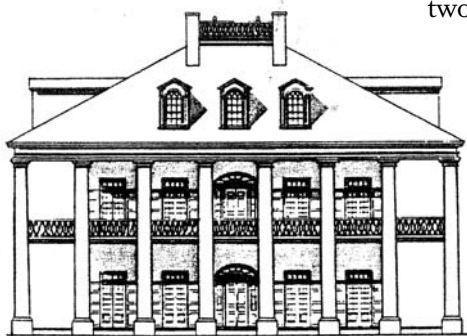
provide both sun control and ventilation. Since the buildings of Sainte face each other directly across ancient narrow streets, shutters are also quite useful for nighttime privacy, opening and closing with sunrise and sunset.

When the French tradition moved to colonial America, it was assimilated and changed by the warmth, water, and mud of southern Louisiana. Here, near the mouth of the Mississippi River, French colonists adapted the familiar compact cottage of their homeland. Houses grew stilts to rise above the swampy ground. Broad encircling open galleries sprouted to shelter from sun and rain. French doors containing operable wooden shutters provided cross-ventilation and sun control. Though none of the earliest houses survives in the region, larger and less primitive versions remain prevalent as the *plantation house*.<sup>2</sup>

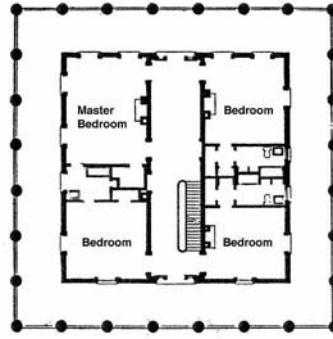
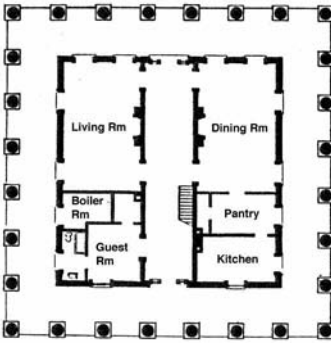
One remaining example of the French adaptation to a hot, humid climate is Oak Alley, an 1830s plantation house in southern Louisiana. This two-story, colonnaded structure facing the Mississippi River is dramatically approached from the north between

two rows of great spreading oak trees. Its 16-inch (40.6 cm) walls are constructed of river-mud bricks. The house, which provides for a comfortable and gracious life, is square in plan, centered by a hall that once served as a second parlor, and is surrounded by a wide veranda.

Architect Susan Ubbelohde has examined Oak Alley's complex response to climate. She explains how the house can be made to function as either an "open parasol" or a "thermal enclave" by adjusting louvered doors on opposite sides of rooms and service spaces. One set of doors opens onto the wide central hall that is topped by a belvedere for exhausting warm air. An opposing set of doors opens to the surrounding veranda. Fifteen-foot (4.6 m) high ceilings in



Oak Alley: Southern Louisiana  
plantation house, 1830s.  
(From Ubbelohde 1986, 360.)  
(Drawing by Brian Anderson  
and Brian Spencer.)



Oak Alley:  
 (Left) Ground floor;  
 (Right) Upper floor.  
 (From Ubbelohde 1986, 360.)  
 (Drawing by Brian Anderson  
 and Brian Spencer.)

rooms allow hot air to rise above head height. By adjusting both sets of doors, dwellers are able to open the rooms for summer cross-ventilation or close them against the winter chill. “A second layer of operable sun controls, the wooden shutters on each French door, can be used during those periods when the overhangs do not provide the necessary shade.”<sup>3</sup>

### THE TURKISH HOUSE

Shutters are often used to stunning architectural effect in Muslim countries where privacy is considered especially important. A Turkish example combines fixed woodwork screens above adjustable shuttered windows. Viewed from outside, the result is a rich composition of varied shapes and textures. Inside, light moving through the screens reconstructs the rooms into conflicting daytime versions of themselves.

Another example, of a single window, includes a central jalousie that slides up and down in wooden grooves against the shifting glare of the sun. In the lower position it historically offered women within a considerable degree of privacy, allowing them to see the world go by without themselves being seen.<sup>4</sup>

A modern example of the Muslim fascination with shutters and light is found in the Institut Du Monde Arabe, Paris. A glass and