

Design Guidelines - Porches, Stoops & Balconies

Po1 Historic porches, stoops and balconies should be retained and preserved.

Po2 Retain and preserve character-defining architectural elements and features of historic porches, stoops and balconies such as piers, foundation walls, lattice, flooring, porch supports, ceilings, railings, balusters, steps, brackets and other decorative details.

Po3 If a porch or some of its elements have been removed or altered, restoration work should be based on historical, physical or photographic evidence rather than supposition. New work should match the original in materials and proportions.



Po4 Avoid removing historic porches, stoops or balconies that are no longer in use. Doors may be abandoned, but they should always be able to be made operable again at a later date.

Po5 Enclosure of existing open porches is not recommended. However, if porch enclosure is desired, the work should be done in a manner that does not destroy, damage, or obscure important historic features and is reversible.

Po6 Common treated wood decking materials are inappropriate for use on historic porches.

Po7 Decks are inappropriate on the primary facades of historic buildings.

Po8 Wood porches should be adequately ventilated to avoid rot and insect damage. Porch roofs should be adequately drained and flashed to avoid moisture damage.

Po9 Do not use cast- or wrought-iron columns, railings or balusters as a replacement for brick or wooden porch elements. Columns should match the size, proportion and detailing of the original.

The porches on these homes are an important part of the streetscape along East Ninth Street.

Po10 Do not cover porch or cornice elements with vinyl or aluminum siding or other applied materials.

Po11 Replace deteriorated porch steps in kind. Replacement steps should be the same materials, dimensions and scale as the original. Do not replace historic stone steps unless the stone itself is no longer usable.

Po12 Avoid adding new porches, stoops or balconies to primary elevations where none existed historically.

Po13 Avoid the use of stock railings, columns, or other ornament that may not relate proportionally to historic porches.



Po14 Make ramps and other entrance and porch modifications necessary for the disabled reversible, so as not to obscure or damage architectural features and diminish the building's historic character.

Po15 If adding a handrail to a porch or stoop that did not previously have one, install it in a manner that will minimize damage to or loss of historic fabric. Consider mounting the handrails in the ground adjacent to the steps rather than drilling into historic stone steps, for example.

Po16 Porches and balconies are very susceptible to weathering and water damage. Follow a program of routine inspections and maintenance to ensure the long-term viability of your historic or new porch. Maintain a proper slope to the floors and steps to ensure good drainage. Maintain a sound coat of paint and caulk exposed joints. Check the condition of wood, metal and masonry elements regularly for signs of deterioration.

This historic postcard image (left) was used to rebuild the porch of this Ekin Avenue home to its original appearance.

