

Porches and Decks

Staff Letter - No Certificate Necessary:

1. Repair of an existing porch when materials and patterns match the existing porch.

Staff Level Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. Removal of a non-historic porch.
2. New patios and decks in back yards with no railings, or any elements higher than 18" off the ground, and nothing visible from the street.
3. Handrails on private sidewalks in a front yard.

Commission Level Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. All new patios and decks with railings and elements higher than 18" off the ground and that are visible from the street.
2. Adding a porch, or any elements thereof, where none currently exists.
3. Rebuilding a porch where the elements and character of the porch are different from the current existing porch.
4. Removal of a historic porch or any elements of a historic porch.

Recommended:

1. Repair and retain original porches.
2. If rebuilding is necessary due to structural instability, reuse as much of the original decorative details and fabric as possible.
3. Assess the significance of a non-original porch before considering removing or altering it. A porch added to a building at a later date should not be removed simply because it is not original. It may have its own architectural or historic importance and is evidence of the evolution of the building.
4. Original porch floors should be repaired or replaced to match the original.
5. If a porch is missing, a new porch should be based on as much evidence as possible about the original porch design, shape, and details. Check the following sources for evidence:
 - a) Old photographs.
 - b) Sanborn insurance maps.
 - c) Paint lines defining porch roof outlines.
 - d) Paint lines defining porch post design.
 - e) Remnants of the porch foundation.
 - f) Similar houses in the neighborhood (helpful but not always dependable).
 - g) Oral descriptions from previous owners.
6. Where little or no evidence of the original porch remains, a new porch should reflect the typical porch form of the era. In a reconstruction under this circumstance, the Commission may require architectural elevations and plans to document the details of construction.

Porches and Decks (cont.)

7. Patios and decks in back yards with no railings, no elements higher than 18" off the ground and not visible from the street.

Not Recommended:

1. Alterations to historic porches, especially on primary facades.
2. Replacing original stone steps.
3. Replacing original wood floors with concrete.
4. Placing new porches in locations which never had porches, especially on significant elevations.
5. Porch members made of or covered with vinyl or metal.
6. Enclosing open porches.