

PORCHES AND DECKS

DESIGN GUIDELINES



Porches are important elements of traditional Louisville architecture. They frame and protect primary entrances, and add a sense of formality to the entrance space. Porches also often display a concentration of decorative details and help to personalize many of Louisville's historic residences and apartment buildings.

Preserving a front porch is a high priority. Rear and side porches may also be important architectural features, especially for buildings located on corner lots, and their preservation is encouraged.

Original Historic Porches

Louisville's historic front, side, and rear porches add important character and definition to historic structures and districts. Porches and their details should be maintained whenever possible.

P.1 Preserve an original porch in its original location.

- » Do not move, screen, enclose, or demolish an original porch.
- » Do not add new ornament to a historic porch that did not exist historically or cover architectural details.
- » Do not add a front porch to the primary facade of a historic structure that has never had a porch.

P.2 Repair a porch in a way that maintains the original character.

- » Use a material that is similar to the historic building material in style, texture, finish, composition, and proportion.
- » An alternative material may be considered for a porch when the appearance is similar to that of the original. Consult the "Alternative Materials" chapter for more information.



Preserve an original porch in its original location. Porches personalize many of Louisville's residences and apartment buildings and are important to preserving the character of a building and preservation district.



Preserve an original porch in its original location. An original porch enhances the design of a single facade and unifies an area of a preservation district through repetition of form.

P.3 If reconstruction is required, design porch elements in a way that reflects the time period of the historic structure and use in-kind materials. Consult the “Alternative Materials” chapter for more information.

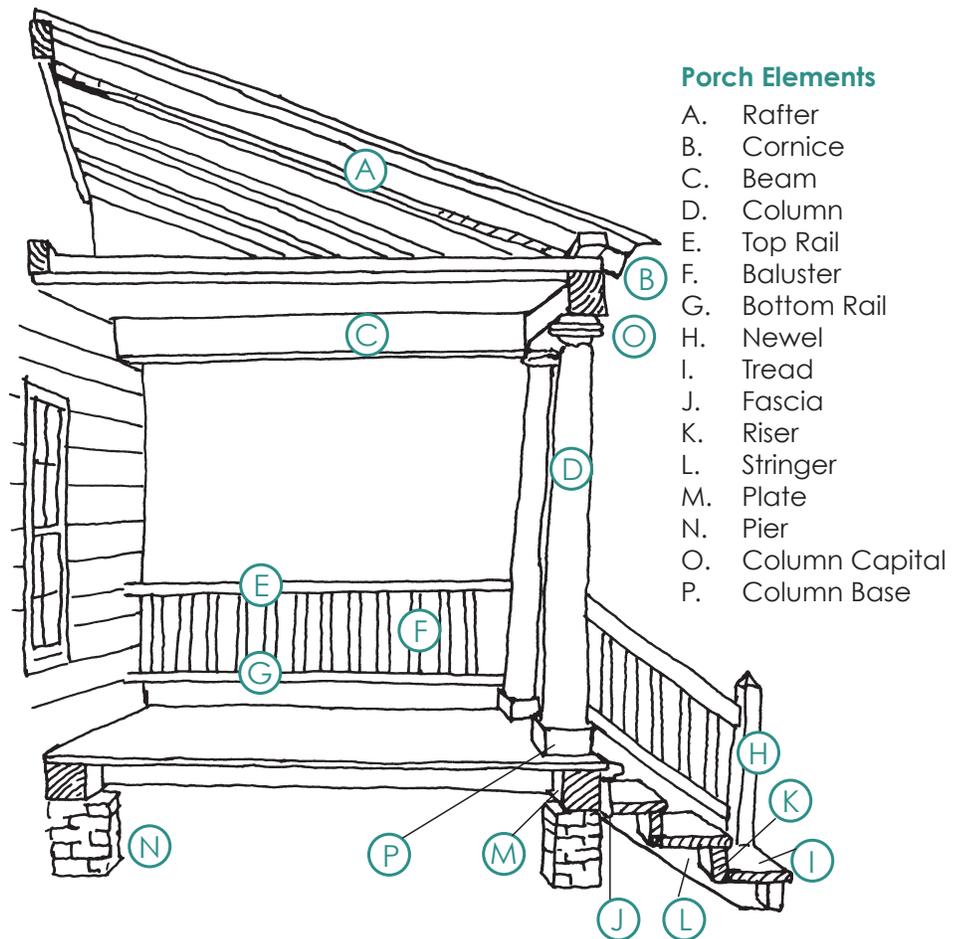
- » Install replacement flooring that closely matches the original tongue and groove flooring dimensions.
- » Match the dimensions of the original material.
- » Do not use over-sized boards for a porch floor.
- » Do not replace historic stone steps unless the stone is no longer usable.

P.4 When enclosing a side or rear porch, preserve the design and detailing of original porch elements.

- » Use large sheets of recessed glass rather than solid materials for the enclosure.



If reconstruction is required, design porch elements in a way that reflects the time period of the historic structure and use in-kind materials.



Original Porch Railings and Balusters

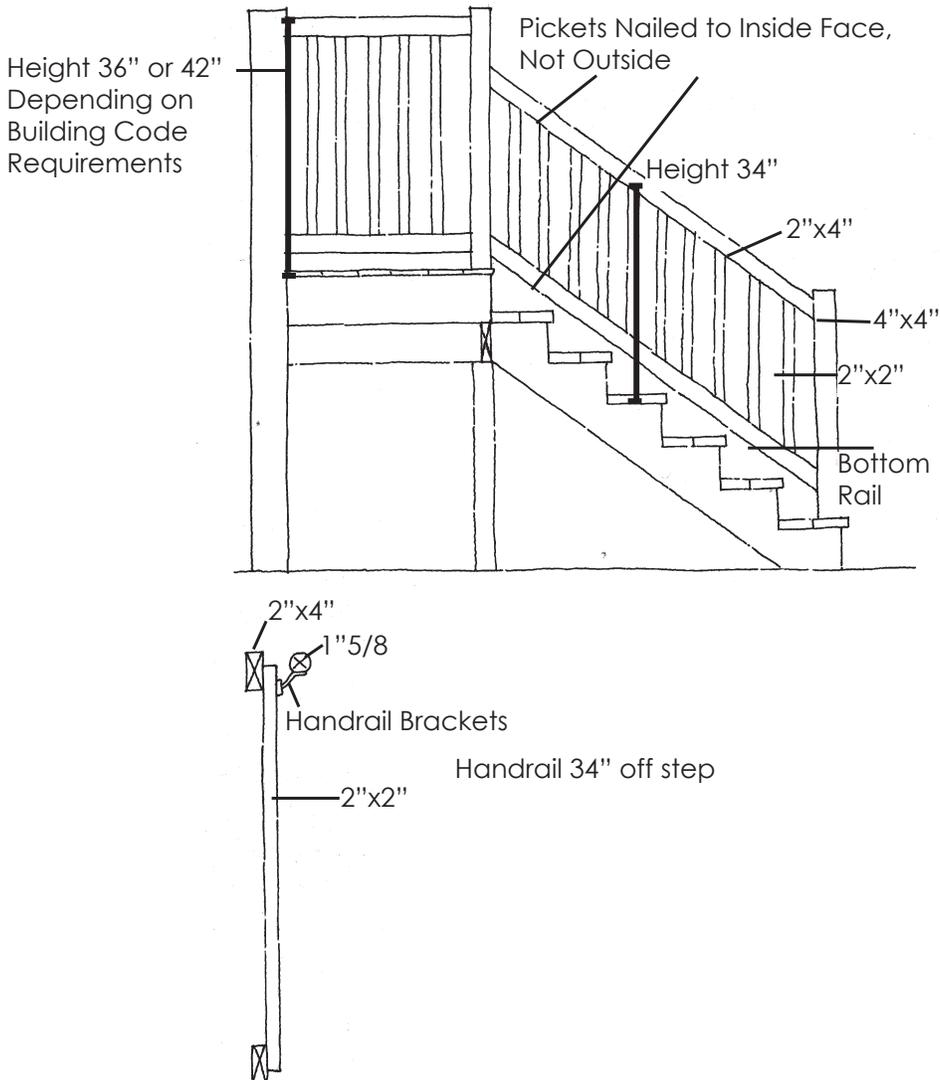
The railings and balusters on historic porches contribute to the style and character of a historic building, the overall historic property, and the district. Railings and balusters are essential porch elements and should be maintained.

P.5 Preserve an original railing or baluster.

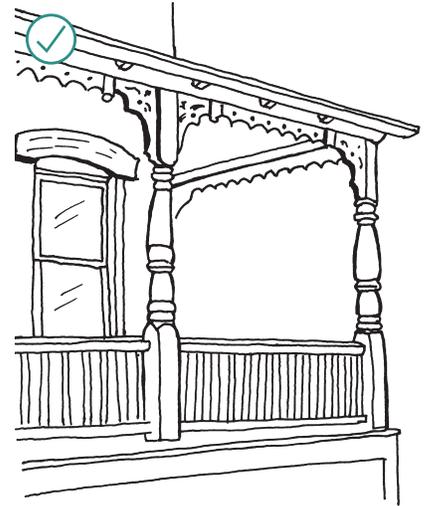
P.6 Design a replacement railing or baluster to match the original as closely as possible.

- » If matching the original design is technically or economically unfeasible, a simplified porch rail and baluster may be used. Consult the diagram below for more details about typical dimensions for brackets, railings, and balusters.
- » When installing a code-required handrail or railing, select a design that is simple and stylistically compatible with a historic railing.
- » Use a replacement material appropriate to the material of the historic structure. For example, a cast- or wrought-iron column, railing, or baluster should not be used to place a brick or wood porch element.

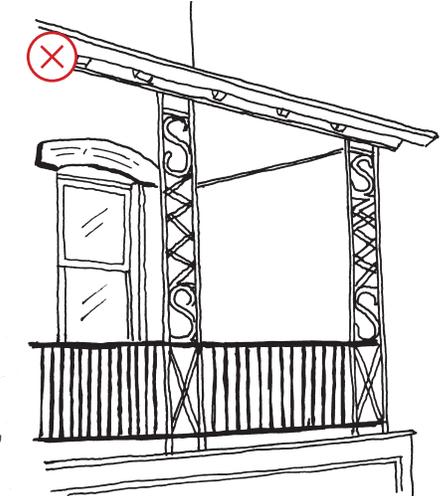
Typical Handrail Pattern Used in Preservation Districts



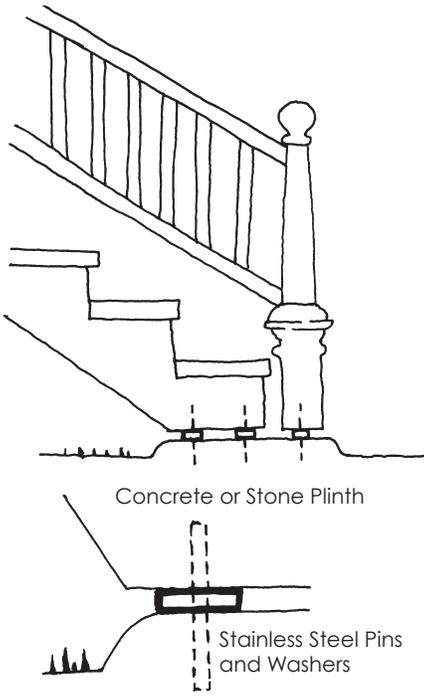
Historic Porch



Inappropriate Replacement



Repair a porch in a way that maintains the original character.



Resting the bottom step on a concrete or stone plinth inhibits moisture-related deterioration.

New Deck

The construction of a new deck on a historic structure responds to the modern use of a building and should be designed in a way that is sensitive to the character of the historic building. Prior to constructing a new deck, permit and Building Code requirements must also be met.

P.7 Minimize visibility of a new deck.

- » Construct a new deck at the rear of a historic structure but not extending beyond the side walls of the historic structure.
- » Do not construct a new deck along a front or side facade.

P.8 Minimize damage to the original historic structure and maintain the ability to remove the new deck.

P.9 Use wood when constructing a new deck.

- » Choose a wood material that is opaque, stained, or painted when constructing a new deck.
- » Alternative materials may be allowed on certain portions of a new deck. Consult the "Alternative Materials" chapter for more information, and contact Metro Staff in Louisville's Planning and Design Services Office for more information.