



Hastings has celebrated “Front Porch Days” since the 1980s. Porches are an exterior living space that mark the transition between the private house and public street. Some only cover the entry, while others wrap around the building.

Porches and steps are exposed to the weather and receive hard use. Some buildings have had a succession of replacements that reflect different styles of architecture.

In reconstructing a missing porch, it is important to select posts and railings of appropriate scale and detail. Avoid using undersized ready-made trim.

Changes and additions that have taken place over the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and may have significance in their own right. A Queen Anne porch, for example, may have been placed on an earlier Greek Revival house.

Design Guidelines

1. Maintain and Conserve

Porches, steps, and handrails that are appropriate to the building and its architectural development should be conserved and retained.

2. Repair and Replacement

Historic porches, steps, or handrails that require complete rebuilding or partial replacement should be reconstructed using historical research to determine an appropriate design. Reconstructions should be compatible with the period and style of the building in material, design, and detail. Concrete should not be used to replace wooden porch floors or steps.

3. Railings

The original spacing, section, and profile of railings and balusters should be maintained in replacement or repair. Unless historical evidence indicates, reconstruction should include a bottom rail and balusters should not be nailed directly to the step or deck. Metal railings should not be used to replace wooden railings.

4. Posts and Columns

If replacement is necessary, porch posts and columns should be replaced with units that replicate the original materials, size, and scale. Elaborate details such as carving, turning, gouging, or stamping may be simplified if necessary. Wooden posts should not be replaced with metal posts or supports.

5. Enclosure

Unenclosed front porches should not be permanently enclosed.

6. Decks

Decks should be constructed only at the rear of the building or where most inconspicuous from the public street. Railings, steps, and other deck details should be compatible with the architectural character of the building.

7. Fire Stairs

The detailing of fire stairs should be compatible with the period and style of the building. In consultation with the building official, fire stairs should be located as inconspicuously as possible.

Residential Guideline 7: Porches and Steps



These Hastings porches appear to date from about 1900. Both have classical columns and trim.

Porch Terms

Balustrade

A railing made up of balusters attached to a top rail and used along stairs, landings, porches, and balconies.

Baluster

A vertical member that supports a stair rail.

Deck

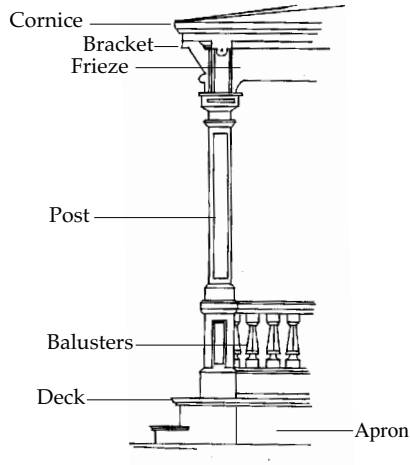
A flat, floor-like roof or platform generally built for storage or outdoor living.

Spindle Frieze

A horizontal band of decoration composed of turned spindles and other ornamental work.

Turning

One of various cylindrically shaped objects produced on a lathe. Spindles and balusters are often turned.

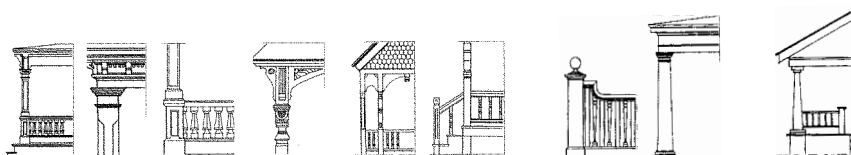


Parts of the Porch (Italianate Style)

1850s-1870s

1880s-1900

1910-1930



Porch Style Chronology



The front porch was a gathering place for the LeDuc family, ca. 1900. (Photo: MHS)