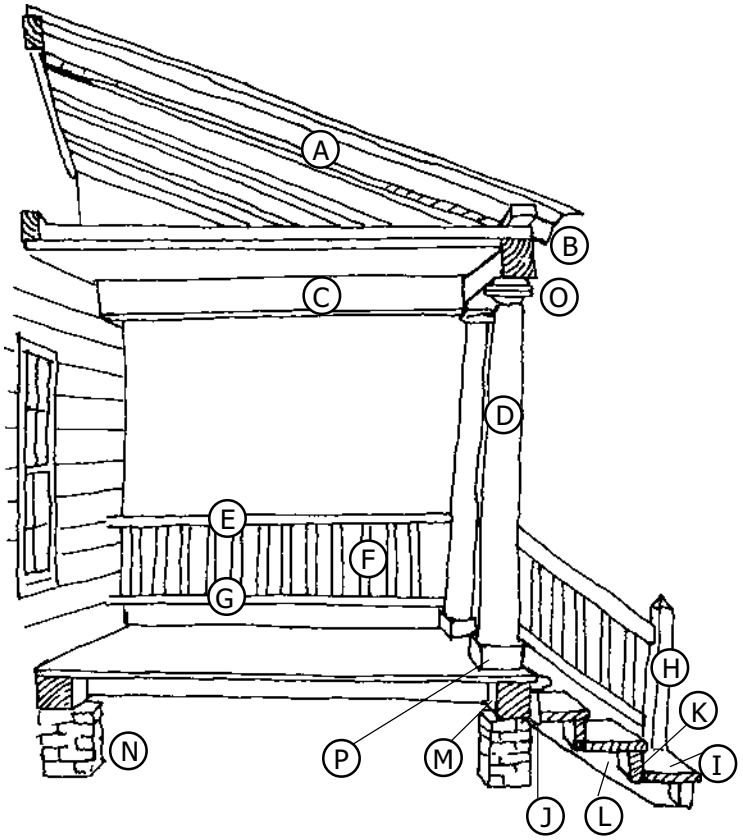


Porch Elements

A. Rafter
B. Cornice
C. Beam
D. Column
E. Top Rail
F. Baluster
G. Bottom Rail
H. Newel
I. Tread
J. Fascia
K. Riser
L. Stringer
M. Plate
N. Pier
O. Column Capital
P. Column Base

Porch

Design Guidelines

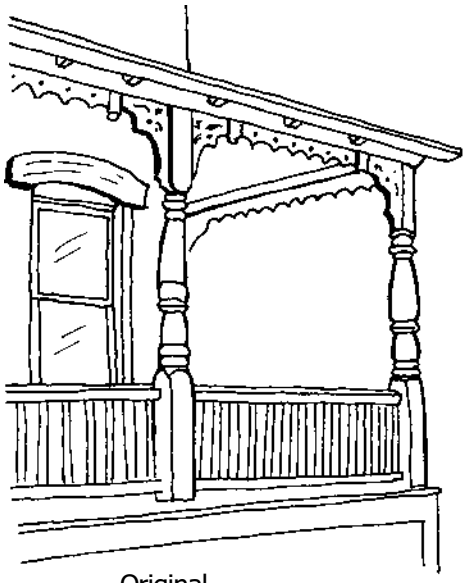
Porches help to personalize many of Louisville's residences and apartment buildings. Some, such as the one above, are flamboyant, while others are more reserved.

PO1 Replace reconstructed entrance or porch features with in-kind materials. If that is not economically or technically feasible, a compatible substitute material may be considered. Composition and plastic moldings, however, should not be used due to their unproven longevity.

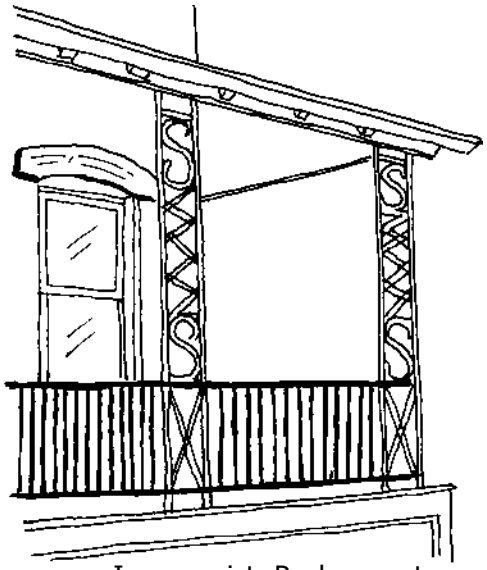
PO2 Photographically document architectural porch features that are slated for reconstruction prior to the removal of any historic fabric.

PO3 Design replacement porch railings and balusters to match the originals as closely as possible. If it is technically or economically unfeasible to accomplish this, a simplified porch rail and baluster design may be used of 2" by 4" rails and 2" by 2" pickets, set between top and bottom rails, and nailed to the inside face of the rail. Railings should be finished with paint or an opaque stain. Plans are available from the Landmarks Commission.

REPLACEMENT MATERIALS SHOULD MATCH THE ORIGINAL



Original



Inappropriate Replacement

Porches serve many design functions. They can enhance the design of a single facade (right) by echoing the roof pitch or unify a block through repetition of form (below).

P04 Do not use cast- or wrought-iron columns, railings, or balusters as a replacement for brick or wood porch elements. Columns should match the proportion, detailing, and size of the original.

P05 When installing a new code-required handrail or railing, select a design that is simple and stylistically appropriate. Generally, metal is appropriate for masonry buildings and wood for frame buildings.

P06 Do not add conjectural porch ornament; often its style conflicts with the style of the house.

P07 Do not use over-sized boards (2" thick) for porch floors. 3/4" to 1" tongue-and-groove boards are generally appropriate.

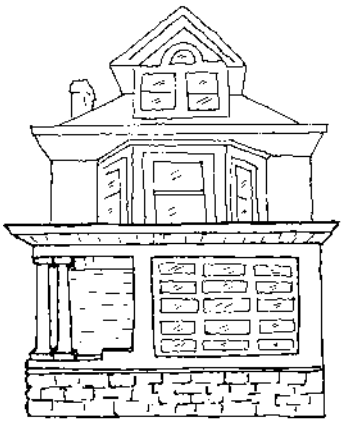
P08 Install replacement porch flooring that closely matches the original tongue-and-groove flooring dimensions. A maximum gap of 1/16" should be left between boards to allow for expansion. Wood edging should be applied to the exposed ends of floorboards to prevent moisture infiltration into the grain.

Porch Deterioration

Because they jut out from the building, porches are extremely vulnerable to the elements. Careful monitoring is required to prevent the disintegration of wood elements.

Do Not Enclose Front Porches

An open front porch complements the rhythm and organization of the facade.



An enclosed front porch results in a blocky, cumbersome appearance.

PO9 Do not cover porch or cornice elements with vinyl or aluminum siding.

PO10 Do not install porch ceilings or close in exposed eaves where none existed previously. Exposed rafters and roof decks are character-defining features for certain architectural styles.

PO11 Replace deteriorated porch steps with in-kind materials. Replacement steps should be of the same scale and dimensions as the original. Stone steps may be patched with concrete that is tinted a visually-compatible color.

PO12 Do not replace historic stone steps unless the stone itself is no longer useable. Resetting stones on a firm foundation and repointing or applying sealant can address most problems.

PO13 Do not enclose front porches. Screen panels that can be removed seasonally, are set behind porch elements, and do not damage historic fabric may be permitted.

PO14 Do not obscure the design or detailing of original porch elements when undertaking a side or rear porch enclosure project. Large sheets of glass recessed behind original porch features should be used rather than solid materials such as wood, stucco, or masonry.

PO15 Do not add porches to the primary facades of structures that never had porches.

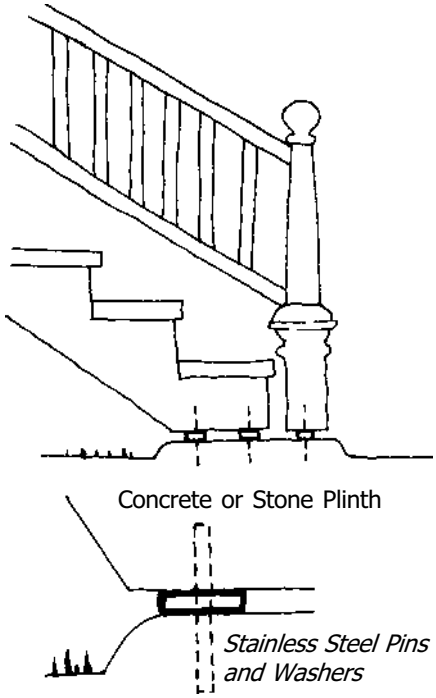
A Spot to Enjoy A Cool Breeze

Not All Buildings Were Meant to Have Porches

Adding a Sense of Formality to the Entrance

Top Right—Even if a porch replacement were appropriate, the materials used were not. Top Left—Porches were designed for many historic apartment buildings to allow residents to take advantage of refreshing breezes. Above—An intricately carved wood porch lends a stately air to an Old Louisville mansion.

Porch Steps Should Not Have "Wet Feet"



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