

YPSILANTI HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

Porches

This is one of a series of Fact Sheets provided by the Historic District Commission to assist property owners and building contractors in planning an appropriate rehabilitation of structures within the Historic District.

The Historic District Commission requires that a building be maintained in its original form whenever possible. The character and historic value of a building both change whenever alterations are made and every effort shall be made to maintain the historical integrity of a building.

Your application for a Historic District Work Permit, submitted to the Building Department, will be forwarded to the Historic District Commission for review and must be approved by the Commission before work can begin. A Building Permit will likely also be required.

Historic District Work Permit applications may be obtained from the Building Department in the basement of City Hall, in the Planning and Development Department on the 4th floor of City Hall, or on the City website, www.cityofypsilanti.com.

The following Historic District Commission requirements apply to all porch projects, new or replacement. The Commission encourages the retention of original porch elements which still exist and, in some instances, requires duplication of parts. Porches should not be enclosed, as doing so changes both the appearance and the function of the porch.

There are eight parts of the porch:

CEILING: porch ceiling shall, in most cases, be of beaded fir.

HEADER: header, if any, and its decorative elements shall be appropriate to the style of the building and in the proper proportion.

POSTS: style of the posts shall be appropriate to the style of the house and existing porch details. If 4x4s are boxed, resulting posts must be at least 5x5. Replacement posts must match original posts, if any still exist, or be of the same diameter as originals. Split posts may be required for attachment to exterior wall.

GUARD RAIL (on the porch):

1 & 2 family homes: guard rail required if porch floor surface is more than 30" above grade. Must be 36" high. (May be as low as 30" if evidence exists to indicate height of original guard rail.) Guard rail shall consist of three parts: **top rail** shall be a minimum 2x4 placed flat & shall have beveled top edges; **balusters** shall be a minimum 2x2 and be spaced so that a 4" sphere cannot pass through; **bottom rail** shall be a maximum 2x4 placed flat with beveled top edges, shall be at least 3" off of porch decking and shall have support blocks if guard rail exceeds 8' between posts. All members shall be centered on the porch posts with butt joints.

3-unit & most multi-family and commercial structures: guard rail required if porch deck is more than 30" above grade. Must be 42" high.

HAND RAIL (down the stairs):

1 & 2 family homes: one hand rail required for all stairs with 4 or more risers. Must be graspable. Wood hand rails shall match the guard rail in style. Hand rails are to be installed at 34-38" above the face of the stair nosing of the first tread and must extend from the face of the top riser to the face of the bottom riser. No extension beyond bottom riser required. All diagonal members shall be centered on the porch posts and newel posts with butt joints. 1 ½" pipe rails may occasionally be required.

3-unit & most multi-family and commercial structures: hand rails required on both sides of flights of 1 or more risers. Must be graspable. Must begin 12" horizontally beyond the face of top riser and extend at a slope to at least one tread beyond the face of the bottom riser. Ends shall return to wall or terminate at post or safety terminal.

DECK: the deck (floor) of the porch shall be 1x4 tongue and groove vertical grain fir porch flooring, and shall be installed with the narrow ends of the boards against the wall of the house. The deck shall overhang the skirt and the skirt trim by at least 1". The last deck boards (one at each end of the porch) shall have the exposed

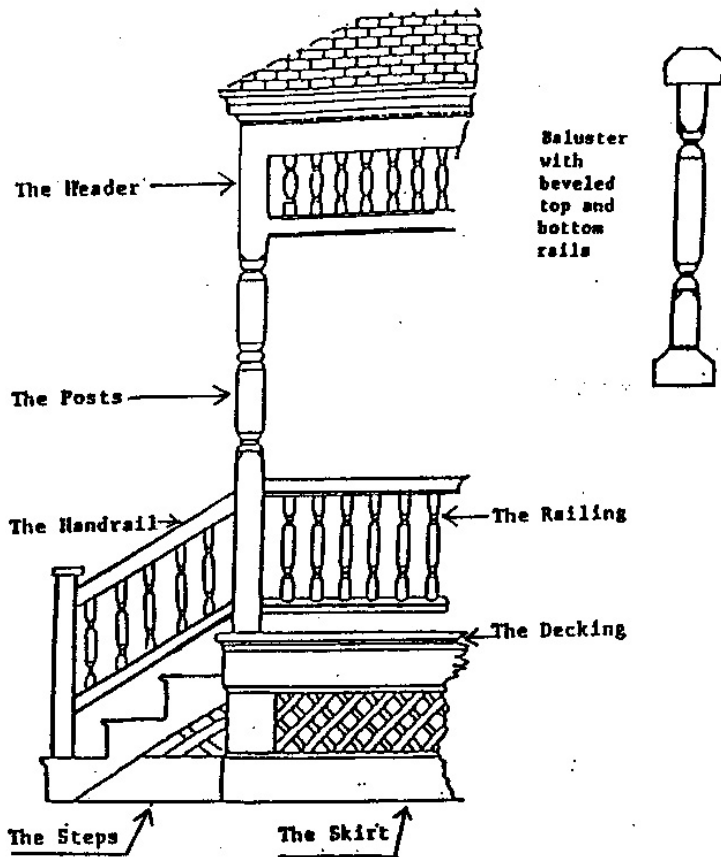
tongue and groove trimmed off.

SKIRTING: skirting is required. The skirt shall be framed with a minimum 1x4. Prefabricated lattice is acceptable, although the Commission strongly recommends original style and more decorative skirting.

STEPS: pre-formed, multi-step concrete units are prohibited. There are four different parts to the wooden step unit: stringers, treads, risers and skirt. All parts of steps shall be of 5/4" lumber, rather than 2x6, 2x8 or 2x10. The maximum height of the rise shall be 8 1/2". The minimum depth of the tread shall be 9". Treads shall rest on the stringers, not be rabbeted into the stringers. The tread shall consist of two boards separated by a 3/8" gap. Spacers shall fill the gap over the stringers. Treads shall overhang fronts of risers and side of stringers by no less than 1". The rise must be enclosed with a solid panel and shall cover the stringer. The top step must be one rise below the deck. A skirt shall enclose the area beneath the stringers and shall be the same style as the skirting on the porch.

NEWEL: newel posts shall match or be harmonious in style and size with porch posts. They shall be mounted on the bottom step and shall be capped.

All parts of porch shall be painted or opaque-stained, including treated lumber.



***All parts of porch shall be painted, or stained opaque, including treated lumber.**

