

# PORCHES

## HUNTINGTON WOODS HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION Guidelines For Historic Districts And Designated Historic Properties

**I. Definitions:** For purposes of these guidelines, porches include structures attached to or immediately adjacent to a permanent structure, with or without a roof, without permanent weatherproof walls or windows, used as or connected to an entrance to the main structure.

### II. Policy

The Secretary of the Interior=s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings *recommend against*:

"Removing or radically changing entrances and porches which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished."

"Removing an entrance or porch because the building has been re-oriented to accommodate a new use."

"Enclosing porches in a manner that results in a diminution or loss of historic character such as using solid materials such as wood, stucco, or masonry."

The following guidelines concerning porches are provided to assist in the interpretation and application of the Secretary of the Interior=s Standards and Guidelines.

### III. Guidelines

Any repair, replacement, change or addition to a porch should be consistent with the main structure and its setting in size, style, materials and appearance. Any repairs should be conservative in nature. Total reconstruction may be unnecessary. Repairing only problem areas cuts down on cost and preserves the original integrity of the structure.

Materials and construction methods used at the time of construction of the main structure are recommended; however, newer methods or materials may be acceptable when they are consistent with the Secretary of Interior=s Standards. The finished appearance must be consistent with the existing structure.

#### A. *Size, Shape and Proportion*

Porches should be consistent with the design, scale and levels of the

house. When available, photographic or other evidence of the original porch should be incorporated in the application.

### ***B. Materials***

New materials used on the floor of the porch should match materials used on the main building, i.e. masonry on brick building, wood on wooden building. Use of cedar or redwood lumber is recommended, but whatever wood is used should be finished or painted. Use of pressure treated lumber is not recommended. Replacement features, such as columns and railings, should duplicate historic features whenever there is adequate documentation. Where a feature is missing and documentation of the original design is not available, the replacement feature should be consistent with the historic porch.

Materials of foundation walls, if any, should match that of the original building foundations. If this is impractical, unobtrusive substitutes should be used. An example would be using grey finished stucco near granite block foundations rather than concrete blocks.

### ***C. Details***

Steps onto porches should have solid risers, rather than an open rise (the vertical area between the steps). Porch floors should provide for drainage.

Roofs, columns, railing spindles, finials, etc. should be appropriate to the architectural style of the porch and the original structure and be constructed of consistent materials. Railing heights should be appropriate to the design of the porch. A roof should not be added to a structure that was originally designed without a roof. Porch height, width, and depth should be appropriate to the architectural style of the main structure. Typically, front porches face the street, are stepped up from the average grade of the home, have single entrance doorways and have porch roofs that are no taller than one story. Building Code limits may be waived based on historic preservation concerns.

The spacing of columns, railing spindles and other elements is often critical to the appearance of the porch. Spacing of existing elements on the house, or on other houses of the same style, should be studied carefully.

The style of skirting should match existing original skirting or be consistent with that commonly used at the time the original building was constructed. Use of stock, unframed, cross-hatched wooden skirting in a diamond design is not recommended.

These guidelines were approved on \_\_\_\_\_, 2004 by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office under the provisions of Michigan=s Local Historic District Act (1970 PA 169, Section 5.(3); MCL 399.205)