



# City of Saratoga Springs

## Porches & Decks

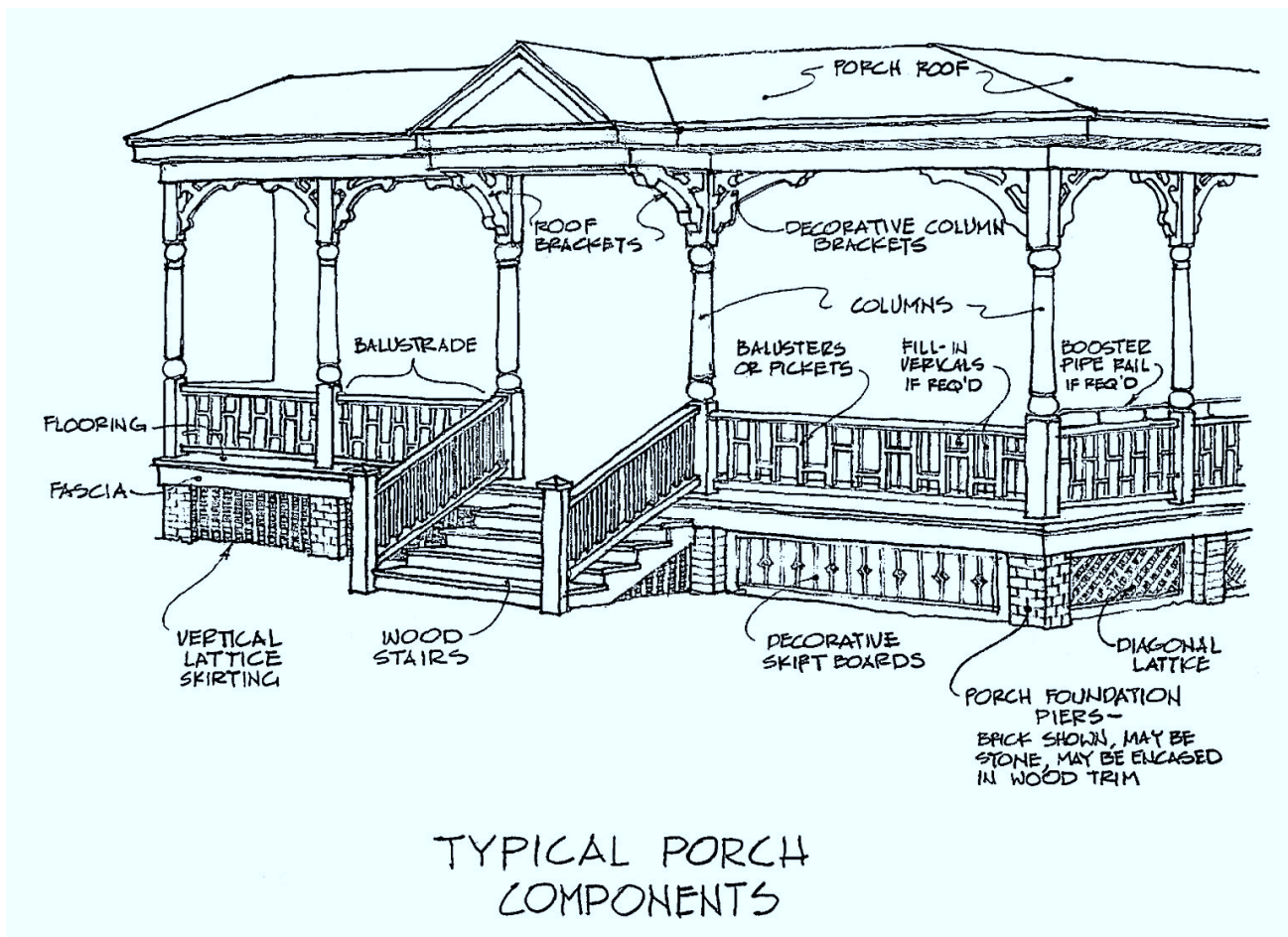
### Historic District Design Guidelines

Porch size, design and materials are integral to the style of a building. Functionally, they frame and protect main entrances while they also contribute to the visual character and architectural significance of a building. Porches may be small and utilitarian, such as an entry porch, or large and elaborate, such as a wrap-around porch with decorative column and brackets. For the purpose of these guidelines "porch" refers to the assembly of the porch roof structure and roofing, foundation, columns, balustrade, flooring, stairs and ornamentation.

A deck is an uncovered outdoor living space. For the purpose of these guidelines "deck" refers to the assembly of the foundation, flooring, balustrade, stairs, and ornamentation.

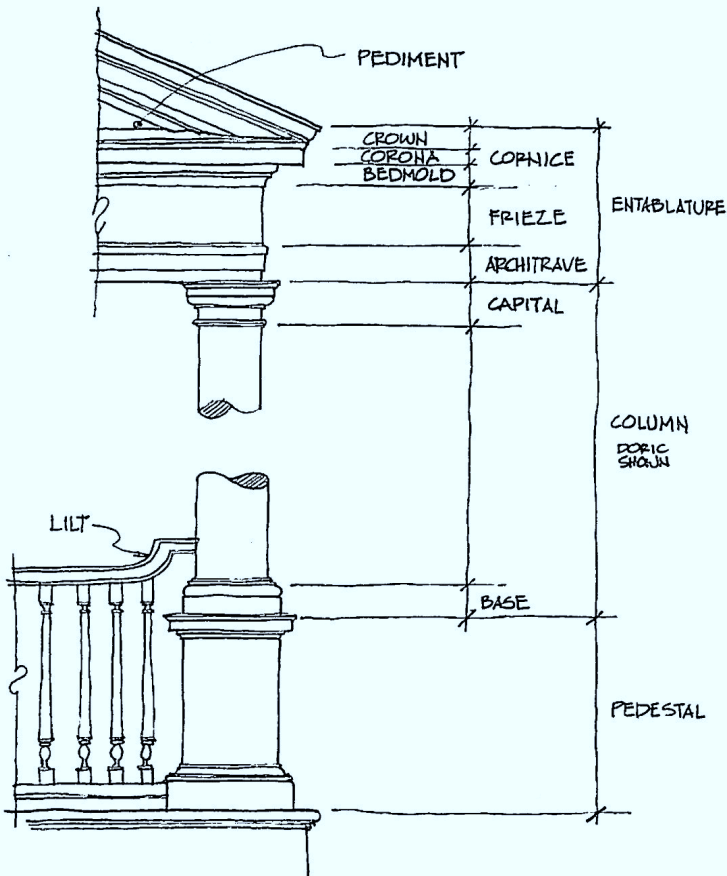
#### PORCHES

- Every effort should be made to preserve an original or historic porch including the original size, design and materials. Demolition of an existing historic porch is to be avoided.
- A porch and its elements, replaced due to severe deterioration, should match the original in size, shape, rhythm, dimensions, material and quantity. Duplication is preferred. Keep original elements to use as patterns. If duplication is not possible, try to locate features at an architectural salvage location.
- Rear and side porches can be important architectural features of a building, especially for buildings that are located on corner lots; they should be preserved.
- Reorienting a porch entrance and relocating front stairs is discouraged.

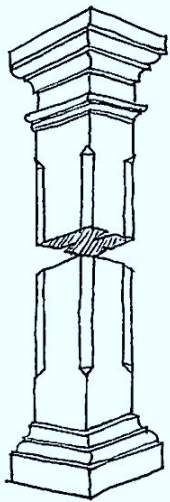


## Porches Continued

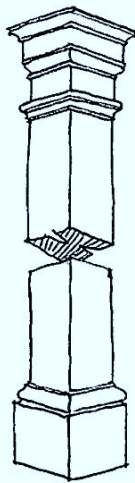
- If replacing a previously removed porch, it should replicate the original in size, design and materials, or be based on historical documentation.
- If no historic evidence is available, the porch should match the design and materials of the architectural style and period of the historic building. Note that an addition of a new front porch to a historic building may not be appropriate, especially if the original building was not designed to accommodate one.
- The use of natural materials is preferred. The use of pressure treated wood is appropriate for concealed substructure. Exposed or painted pressure treated wood is discouraged.
- Avoid the use of cast-iron columns and railings if not historically accurate.
- Avoid the use of masonry bases for wood columns unless it is in keeping with the style and period of the house.
- The full and permanent enclosure of a porch, particularly the front porch, is strongly discouraged as it alters the historic appearance of the building.



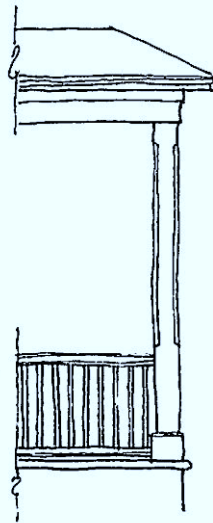
TYPICAL COLUMN COMPONENTS



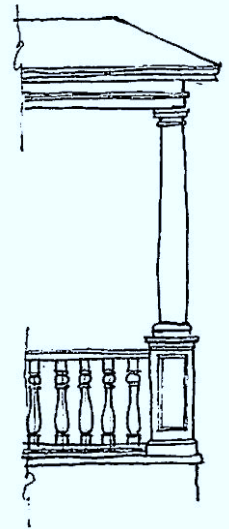
TRADITIONAL POST COLUMN



SIMPLIFIED POST COLUMN



CHAMFERED POST COLUMN  
WITH SIMPLE ENTABLATURE

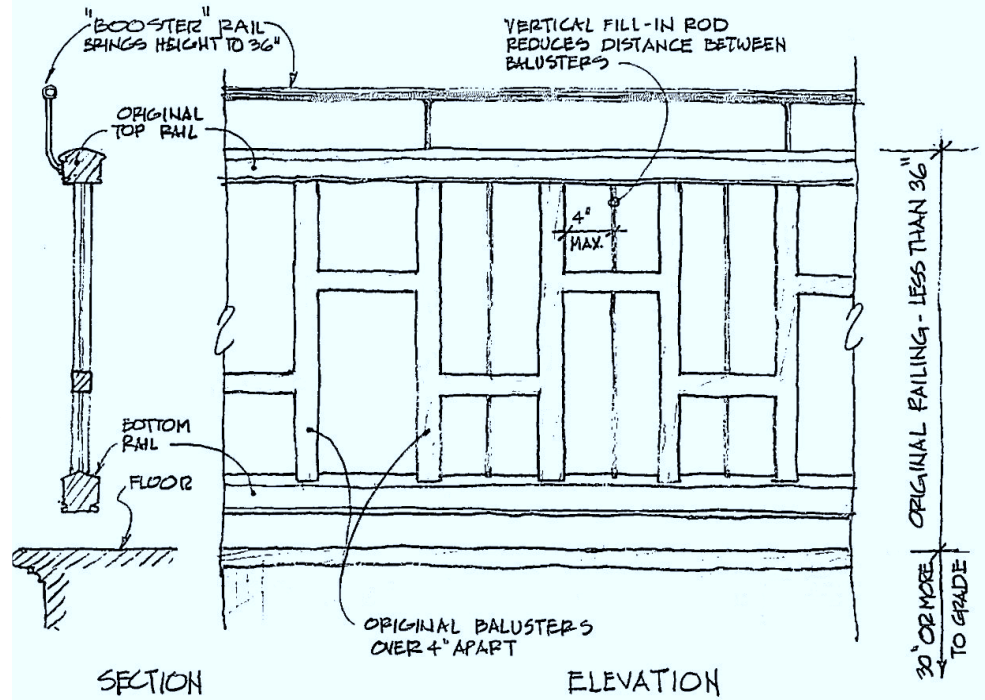


WOOD PEDESTAL  
WITH SHORT THIN COLUMN

## PORCH COLUMNS

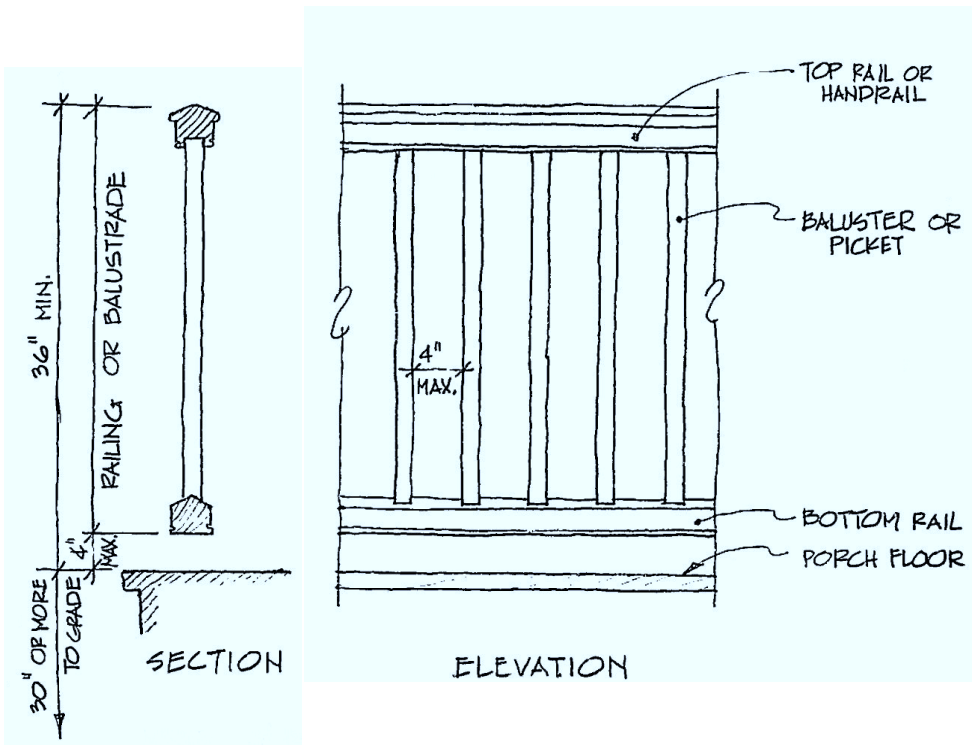
## Porches Continued

- Original or historic balustrade designs may need to be adapted to meet the building code. The use of booster rails may be an appropriate solution to making the original balustrade code-compliant. Replacement balustrade should be limited to the minimum height required by code, unless the original or historic balustrade was higher.



**NOTE:** ORIGINAL RAILINGS MAY NOT MEET CODE REQUIREMENTS OF A 'GUARD'. DEVICES SHOWN CAN MAKE RAILING CODE COMPLIANT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TO APPEARANCE.

## PORCH RAILING



**NOTE:** IF PORCH FLOOR IS HIGHER THAN 30" ABOVE GRADE, THE PORCH MUST HAVE A RAILING. THIS IS REFERRED TO AS A "GUARD" BY CODE, AND HAS REQUIRED DIMENSIONS AS SHOWN.

- The use of pre-cast stairs and concrete flooring is discouraged.
- Latticework and skirting boards, when used, should be placed in a frame. The use of natural materials is preferred. The use of vinyl latticework is not appropriate.
- If unavoidable, a porch enclosure should be reversible. The new enclosure should be designed to minimize any adverse visual impact and should be made of complimentary materials. Screens should be set behind the columns and railings to preserve the original appearance of the porch. The use of retractable screens may be appropriate provided that the storage and mechanisms are concealed from view.

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## NEW DECKS

- The design, size, scale and materials, as well as the relationship between proportion and height of the railing, should complement the existing historic structure.
- It is preferable to place additions at the rear of the existing structure. If this is not feasible, a side addition on the least character-defining elevation may be acceptable.
- An addition should not obscure, damage or destroy the character-defining features of the building or the streetscape.
- An addition should be made in such a manner that, if removed in the future, historic materials would not be irreparably damaged. Proper attachment and flashing is important.
- The use of natural materials is preferred. The use of pressure treated wood is appropriate for concealed substructure. Exposed or painted pressure treated wood is discouraged.

City of Saratoga Springs  
Design Review Commission  
Office of Planning & Economic Development  
474 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
(518) 587-3550 / [www.saratoga-springs.org](http://www.saratoga-springs.org)

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Historic District Design Guidelines were produced in partnership with the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation: (518) 587-5030 / [www.saratogapreservation.org](http://www.saratogapreservation.org). This material has been partially financed with federal funds from the National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior (DOI). However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior. The activity has been administered by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation. This program receives Federal funds from the NPS. Regulations of the DOI strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013

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