

**OTHER GUIDES  
IN THE SERIES:**

Introduction to Historic Astoria

Awnings & Canopies

Commercial Signage

Dormers & Roofline Additions

Garages & Outbuildings

Murals & Wall Graphics

New Additions

Residential Windows



**CITY OF ASTORIA  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPT.**

1095 Duane St.  
Astoria, OR 97103  
P: 503.338.5183  
Email: [planning@astoria.gov](mailto:planning@astoria.gov)

This publication has been funded with the assistance of a matching grant-in-aid from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination 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: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20240.

GUIDE TO

# PORCHES & DECKS



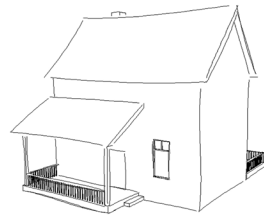
**CITY of ASTORIA**  
**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

## PORCH MAINTENANCE

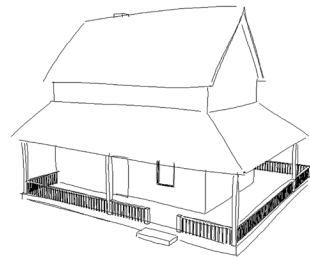
- Maintain historic porches to preserve them and extend their service life. Clean and paint porches regularly, and inspect them often for more serious deterioration.
- When making repairs, reinforce the historic materials and replace extensively deteriorated or missing parts with the same materials. Don't use substitute parts such as recycled plastic wood or vinyl, which change the appearance of the porch.
- Do not remove or radically alter porches.

## RECONSTRUCTION

- If a porch is too deteriorated to repair, take pictures and use them to replicate the porch. Don't replace the original porch with a different style porch.
- Never remove a historic porch without replacing it.
- Use historical, pictorial, and physical documentation to reconstruct a missing porch. If there is no evidence of what the porch looked like, design a new porch that is compatible with the historic character of the building. Don't create a false historical appearance, however. The new porch should be distinguishable from the historic house.
- Details on Astoria's historic homes were usually simple, so in the absence of historic photos, keep the design of a new porch simple.
- Make the new porch compatible in size, scale, materials and color.



DON'T REPLACE THE ORIGINAL PORCH  
WITH A DIFFERENT STYLE PORCH



## ENCLOSURES

Many historic houses have had their original porches enclosed. Opening and restoring original porches can lend a more historic appearance. If the porch was enclosed during the historic period of the house, however, it may be preferable to leave it enclosed.

Don't enclose an originally unenclosed porch. Modern enclosures will almost certainly damage the integrity of a historic home.

## DECKS

- Locate a deck on the rear of the building, invisible from the public right-of-way.
- Design the deck to be compatible with the proportion, details and materials of the historic building. Recycled plastic wood may be acceptable.
- Construct decks so they can be removed without damaging the building.
- Construct decks for the least possible loss of historic fabric. Do not obscure, damage or destroy character-defining features of the historic building.
- Paint or stain the deck to coordinate with the house color. Sand or fill incision "clear" marks on unfinished lumber.

## HISTORY

Porches were designed to provide outdoor living space and decorate the facade of a house. They were also energy-saving devices, shading southern and western elevations.

Porches are important character-defining elements of historic houses. Different house styles have very different porches, from prominent and elaborate to simple and recessed. Porches are also one of the most vulnerable parts of historic buildings because of constant exposure to the elements and their need for vigilant maintenance.

Wood decks began appearing in the 1950s. Decks are not historic, but have become popular substitutes for more traditional patios and terraces.

## REQUIRED PERMITS

- Most structural work greater than 30" above grade requires a permit.
- Any feature that is 12" above grade requires zoning review for compliance with set back requirements.
- Minor repairs on a historic home and changes in materials or design may need to be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

## ADDITIONAL READING:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Assistance Division. National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, rev. 1983.