

ENCLOSED PORCHES

Enclosing porches is generally discouraged by the HARB as this can drastically alter the appearance of a home’s façade and disrupt the rhythm of a streetscape. When enclosure of a porch is unavoidable, choices that will minimize effects to the building and the historic district should be considered.

The HARB encourages:

- reversible enclosures that retain original porch elements intact.
- porch enclosures with large expanses of screen or glass that retain the “community connection” porches historically provided neighbors.
- choosing screens or clear glass inserts located behind existing architectural porch elements, allowing the original open porch elements to be seen by passersby.

The HARB discourages:

- covering or removing original porch components when enclosing a porch.
- using solid construction materials such as wood or masonry to enclose a porch. This type of enclosure is the most jarring change to a façade and streetscape, and is usually irreversible.



TIPS FOR ADDITIONS

Porches chosen for additions should reflect the style and materials of those used in the historic core and on surrounding homes.

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DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR PORCHES

HARB
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
North Wales Borough, Pennsylvania

KEEP THESE PRINCIPLES IN MIND

You want your building to be structurally sound and attractive. As a property owner in the North Wales Borough Historic Preservation District you also want to maintain the historical and architectural heritage of your property and your community. You can succeed at both by using the least intrusive method when developing your improvement plans.

MAINTENANCE FIRST • Frequently the easiest, least expensive, and often overlooked way to protect and preserve your building is a regular maintenance plan. Identify and correct potential problems before they become extensive and expensive. Be on the look out for loose or deteriorating building components, signs of water leakage or moisture penetration, and loss of existing protective coatings (such as paint on wood). Spotting these issues early can avoid problems altogether, or keep them to a minimum.

STABILIZATION AND REPAIR • If you review the condition of your property regularly, you will be able to correct potential problems early through stabilization or repair work. Stabilization and repairs do not change the building’s design and involve minimal work to existing materials. Become informed regarding appropriate repair methods and materials so as not to create new long-term problems in exchange for short-term solutions.

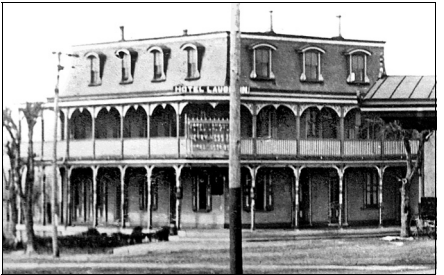
REPLACEMENT • When building components are determined too deteriorated to be repaired, consider replacing them using in-kind materials. Replacing a portion of a building element or detail with in-kind materials will retain the original appearance of your building. When replacement in-kind is determined unfeasible due to unavailability of materials or cost issues, use materials that are similar to the original, being sensitive to the original design and workmanship of your building.

ALTERATION • Alterations change the historic design of your building and can impact its historic district setting. If you determine that alterations to your building are necessary due to a change in the building’s use or living needs, again consider those that are the least intrusive. These include projects that are reversible, compatible with existing design elements and materials, and located on sides of the building not seen from public streets and sidewalks. Additionally, avoid alterations to your building that may not be historically accurate. Such alterations are not desirable as they often present a “false” history. Similar considerations should be given when embarking on a renovation project, using original design elements wherever possible for guidance.



Central Hotel (Previously Hotel Laughlin). Circa 1912.

ADDITION • Additions have the potential to impact a historic building and its historic district setting most significantly. Consider all other options carefully prior to planning an addition, such as reconfiguring the building’s interior spaces. If an addition is determined necessary, strive to create a design that is least intrusive to the historic building and the historic district. Projects that are reversible and located on sides of the building not seen from public streets and sidewalks are recommended, as are additions that retain the historic building’s form, profile, and design elements and materials. New additions should compliment the historic building. It is not necessary to match the original building. Additions that compliment, but not match, allow the original elements to be recognized and appreciated.

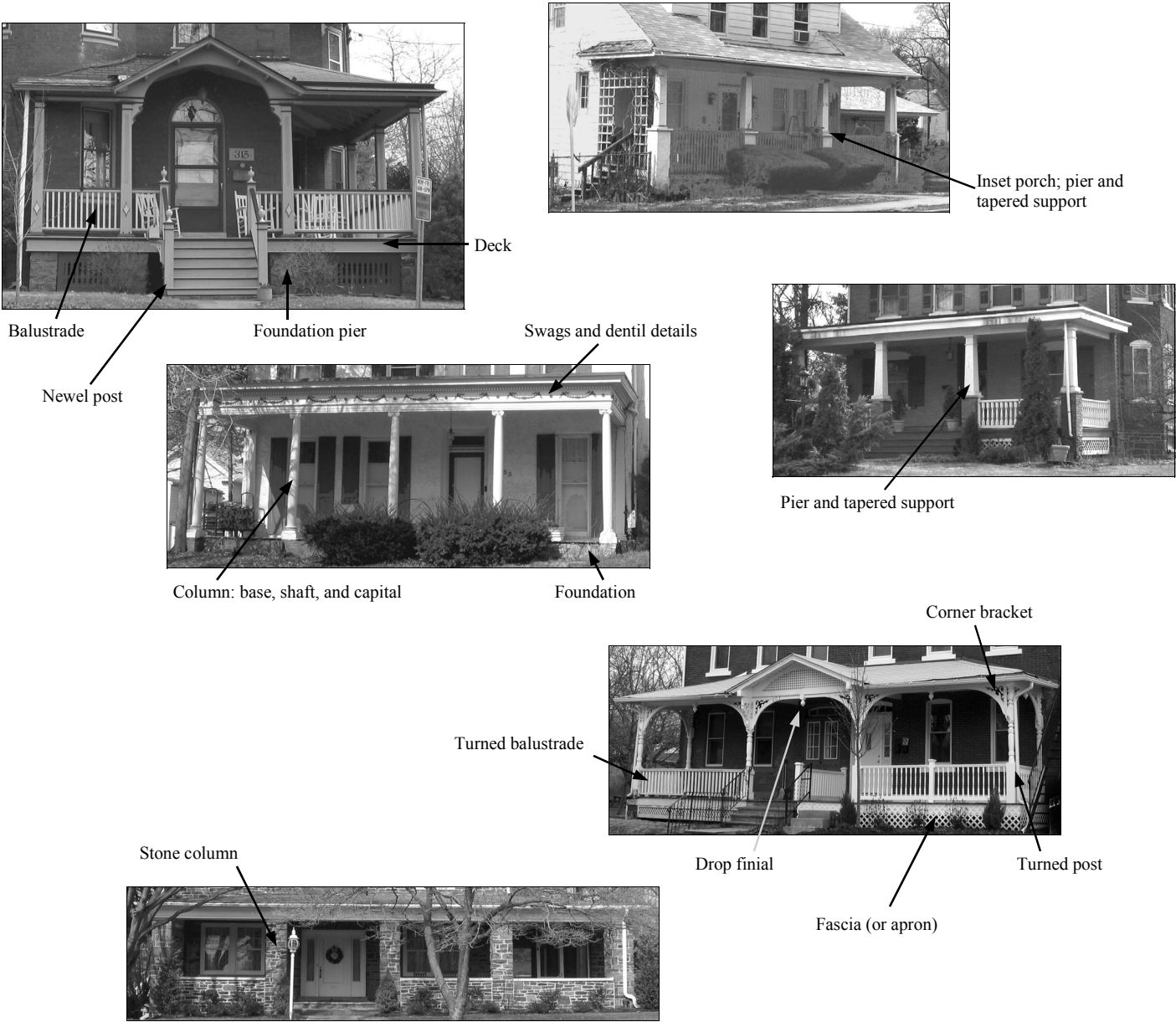


Hotel Laughlin. Circa 1906.

A **PORCH** is a decorative focal point (simple, elaborate, or somewhere in between) on a building’s façade that provides shelter for a front entrance, and a place to relax while remaining connected to community. Before television and air conditioning drew families inside during warm weather, people enjoyed conversation and cool air on a porch. The porch stimulated communication among neighbors. Most historic dwellings were designed and constructed with at least one porch. They promote a sense of community many long for today, as well as contribute to a dwelling’s style and the appearance of a streetscape.

ELEMENTS OF A PORCH

The components of a porch generally fall into four categories: deck, stairs, and foundation; roof and supports; balustrade; and decorative elements. The combination and design of each of these features determines a porch’s style.



MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF DETERIORATED PORCH COMPONENTS

Changes to historic porches are highly visible and have the potential to greatly alter the historic appearance of your home, and its streetscape. Before undertaking such projects take the following suggestions into consideration.

The HARB encourages:

- on-going review and regular maintenance of porches, which often involves an understanding of multiple construction materials. Most porch components are wood, where deterioration is often caused by moisture, insects, and wear. Periodic painting is the best defense against wood deterioration. Maintaining this necessary protective coat is generally enough to keep wood surfaces sound and attractive for many decades. Brick or stone foundations, piers, or columns should be maintained using appropriate cleaning and re-pointing methods and materials (referred to in Design Guidelines for Walls). Roofs should be treated with appropriate maintenance, repair, and replacement methods and materials (referred to in Design Guidelines for Roofs).
- repairing partially deteriorated wood with appropriate drying techniques (remove source of moisture and expose to dry air), insect or fungus treatments, and putty, caulking, and epoxy applications.
- retaining historic porch components including roofs and support columns or posts, foundation or piers, deck and stairs, balustrade, and decorative elements.

The HARB discourages:

- replacing a deteriorated porch component *unless* the majority of the component is deteriorated.



Main Street. Circa 1900.



REPLACEMENT PORCH COMPONENTS

The HARB encourages:

- limiting replacement to *only* those components that are severely deteriorated.
- replacing components in-kind, using existing elements as a guide for material, size, spacing, and patterns.
- using historic photographs or the porches of similar dwellings in the neighborhood when replacing a previously altered porch component or porch.
- choosing minimally intrusive materials and designs when incorporating modern access and safety features to a porch.

The HARB discourages:

- replacing missing or deteriorated supports and balusters with concrete blocks, vinyl or scrolled iron posts and railings, and unpainted pressure-treated wood (i. e. 4x4 posts).
- covering over existing functional and decorative elements with synthetic cladding.
- removal of existing decorative elements.
- adding decorative elements that are inappropriate to the style of the home, or choosing overly simple designs that are inappropriate to the style of the home.