



STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR SPACES

INTRODUCTION

Outdoor spaces such as front yards, rear yards, pergolas, and porches act as transitional space between the public sidewalk and street and the privacy of one's home. In addition, the architectural components of outdoor spaces define the appearance of the streetscape in our historic neighborhoods. This chapter will address the different types of outdoor spaces, how they are defined and their many architectural components.

TYPES OF OUTDOOR SPACES

LIGHTING

COMPONENTS OF PORCHES

FENCES

PAVING



Types of Outdoor Spaces



PORCH

Porches are often referred to as outdoor parlors and act as living space where property owners can greet their neighbors and guests. The roof form of a porch provides shelter from the elements protecting not only the property owner but also the structure's doors and windows. Porches are typically located on the first floor at the structure's main entrance, are 10 to 6 feet deep, partially span or are the full width of the façade and sometimes wrap to the side elevation, and always have a roof. The photo above is of a structure with a column supported porch which is the full width of the front façade and wraps around to the side elevation of the structure. It is deep, and covered by the roof structure of the main house.

REMINDER: All exterior work requiring a building permit requires a Certificate of Appropriateness and must conform with all of City of Fort Worth ordinances. It is helpful when using these guidelines to be familiar with your architectural style.

BALCONY

A balcony is a projecting structure that often acts as an outdoor corridor between rooms. It is generally 4 feet deep, cantilevered, enclosed by a railing or balustrade and can be covered or uncovered.



STOOP

A stoop consists of steps that lead directly to the entrance of a structure, it can have a 3 foot landing and it may be covered by an awning or canopy.



GALLERY

A gallery is a long covered area that can act as a corridor, typically elevated and supported by columns.



CANOPY

A canopy is column supported covering. Its frame is supported by the ground and projects from the wall over an entrance.

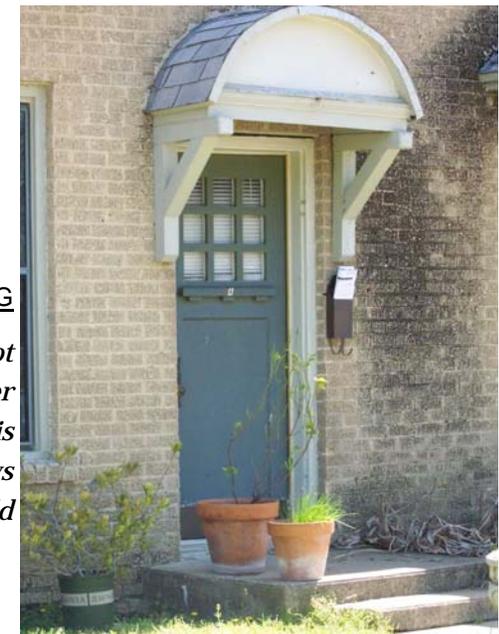
PORTICO

A portico is covered entrance having a roof supported by a series of columns. Typically two stories and can be on the front and rear of residences. They are typically found on institutional and Neo Classical style structures. They are rare in Fairmount and are usually an alteration.



AWNING

An awning is a covering that is not supported by the ground. It is either hung or supported by brackets. It is intended to protect doors and windows from the elements, as well as, add decorative details.



TERRACE

A terrace is an elevated platform. Typically it is the extension of the floor from the main structure or it is built upon a solid base. It is deeper than a balcony and is always uncovered.



PORTE-COCHERE

A porte cochere is a covered passage way for carriages or automobiles. They are attached to the main structure and correspond to a primary entrance.



ARBOR

An arbor is a free standing structure that provides shade through the use of open timber-frame construction. It is supported by evenly spaced columns and often has lattice to support vines or climbing plants.



PERGOLA

A pergola is a shaded walkway or passage way with open timber-frame construction attached to a structure. It is supported by evenly spaced columns and often has lattice to support vines or climbing plants.



NON-VISIBLE SPACES

DECK

A deck is an elevated platform which is attached to the main structure. It is built on an open support system and is uncovered. It is different from a terrace in that the elevated platform is not built on a solid base. **Decks are not appropriate for historic districts and can only be constructed in non visible locations.**

PATIO

A patio is typically a paved area at ground level.

COURTYARD

An interior patio. Typically surround by structure and is open to the sky above.

LIGHTING

Lighting for historic structures should be placed in a location that does not distract or conceal architectural features. Lighting should be appropriate for the architectural type of structure or should not suggest a period or style. In addition, lighting should be discreet and moderate in placement.



LEFT: These light fixtures are appropriate only for Arts and Crafts style structures.



LEFT: These light fixtures are not suggestive of a period of type of architecture and are appropriate for most structures.

COMPONENTS OF A PORCH



ROOF: Providing covering to space below. Generally the same material as the main structure.

SOFFIT: The underside of the eave. Typically wood tongue and groove beaded board. The same material can be found on the porch ceiling.

EXPOSED PORCH BEAM: Sometimes doubled and covered in wood siding depending on architectural style.

COLUMN: Provides support to the roof structure above and differs depending on architectural style. Columns, especially in Arts and Crafts structures can be placed on top of a **PEDESTAL**, also known as a **BASE**.

BALUSTRADE: Comprised of a wood or brick top and rail and baluster.

PORCH FLOOR: Floor should have a slight slope away from the structure to provide proper drainage. Typically is wood tongue and groove or concrete.

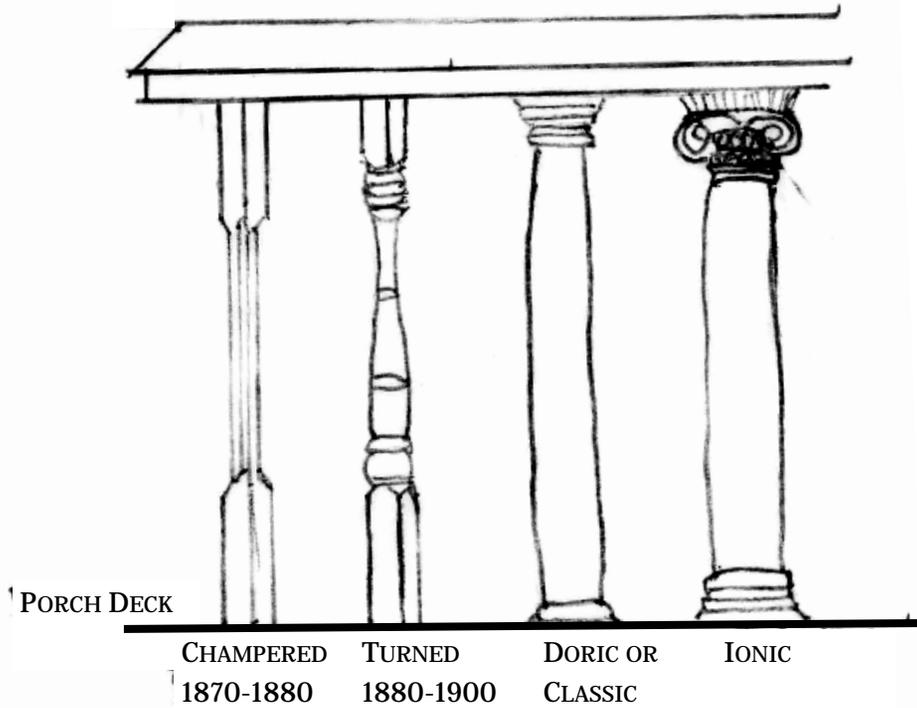
APRON: Conceals the wood sill and floor joist. Typically a 1"x10" wood board.

CHAIN WALL: Continuous foundation which is always masonry. When the chain wall and apron are absent and wood siding is present this is called **SKIRTING**.

COLUMNS

Columns are long vertical structurally supporting members. They come in a variety of styles.

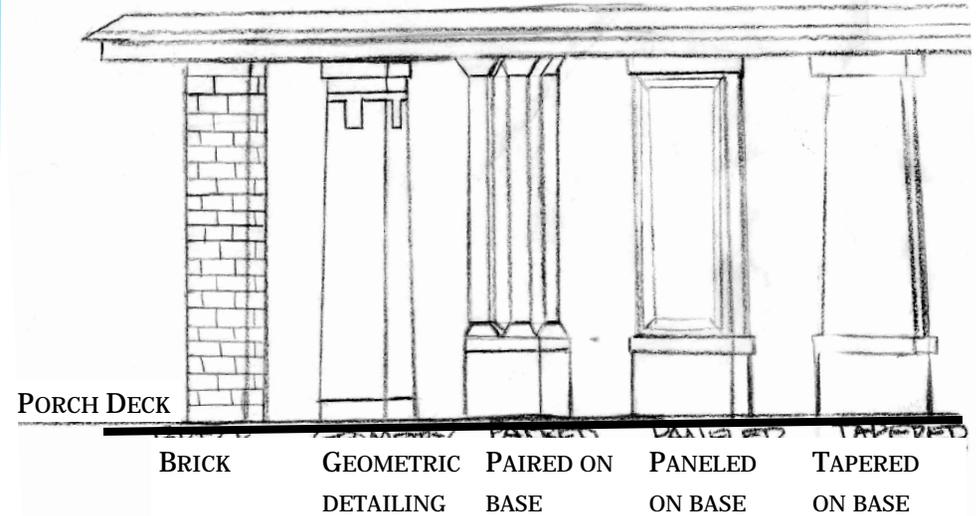
EXAMPLES OF VICTORIAN COLUMNS



RIGHT: The two story Victorian structure has classic round wood columns. These columns are typical on Victorian structures built after 1900.

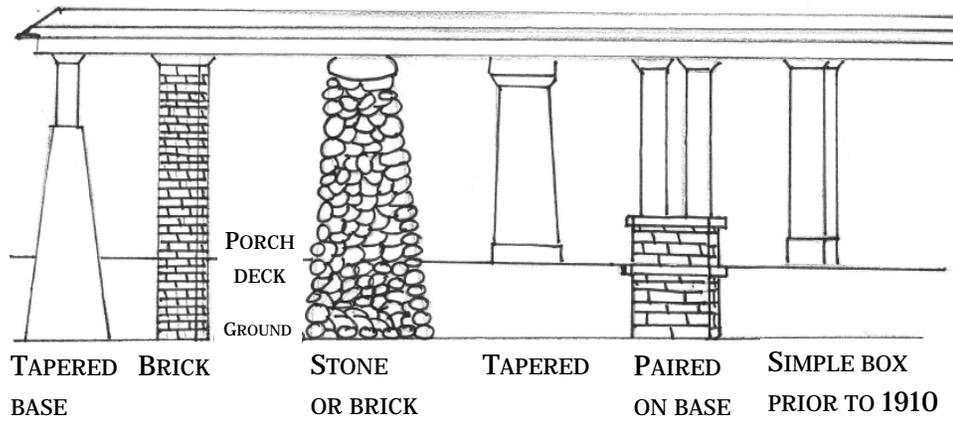


EXAMPLES OF PRAIRIE COLUMNS



ABOVE: The American Four Square style structure has square brick columns.

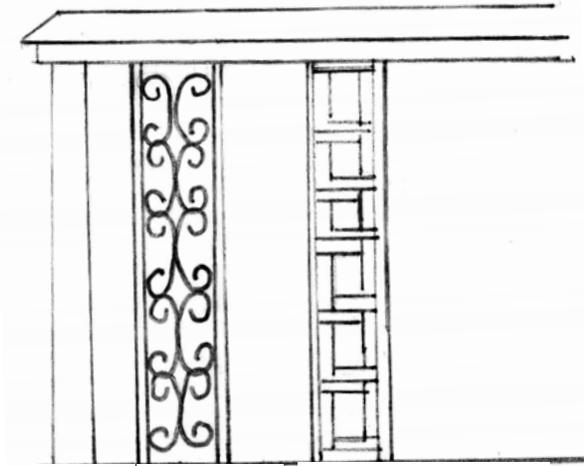
EXAMPLES OF CRAFTSMAN COLUMNS



ABOVE: This one story masonry bungalow has square brick columns that extend to the ground. This type of column is also the prominent column style for Tudor style structure (RIGHT).



EXAMPLES OF MINIMAL TRADITIONAL COLUMNS



4" x 4" IRON POST WOOD GEOMETRIC SCROLL

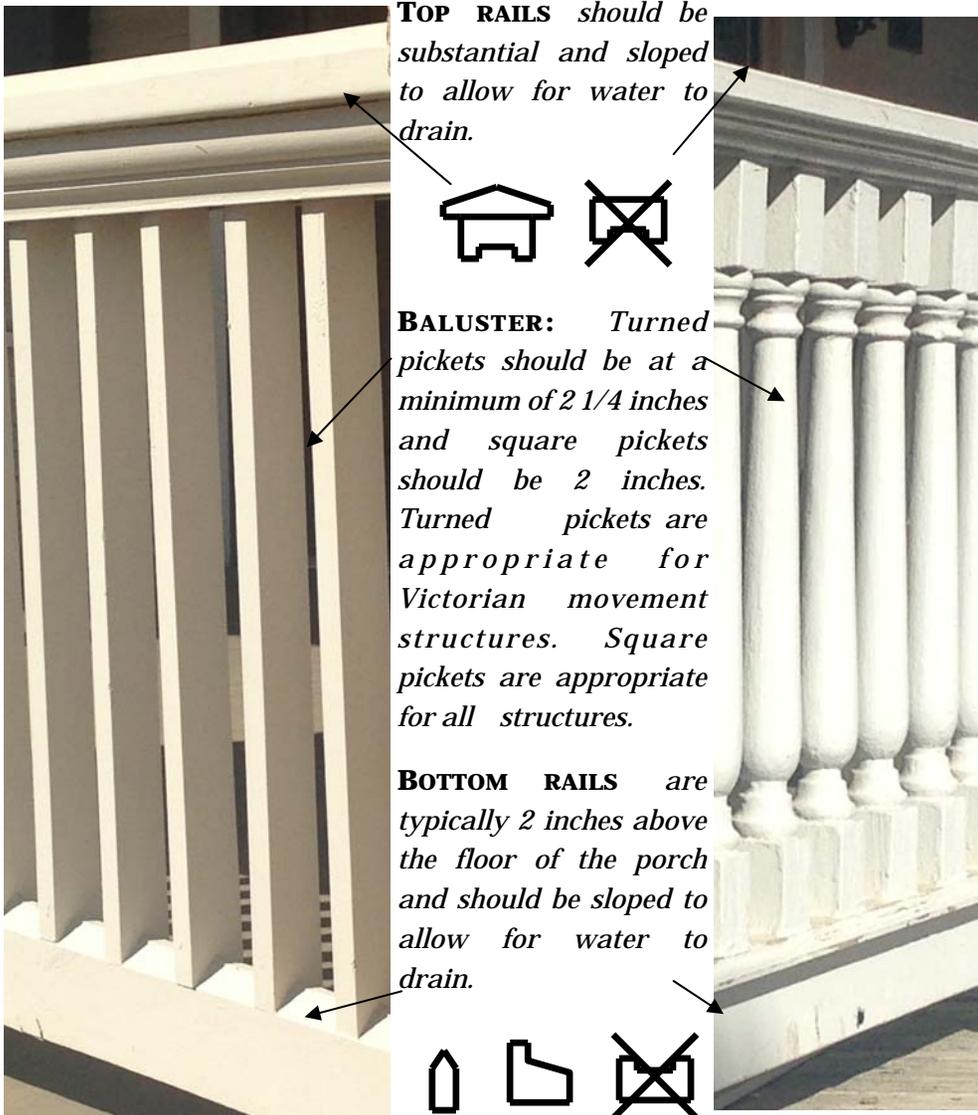
TOP RIGHT: This one story, wood clad Minimal Traditional structure has wood geometric columns. As Victorian and Arts and Crafts columns required repair they were often replaced with inappropriate columns from this the modern architectural style (RIGHT).



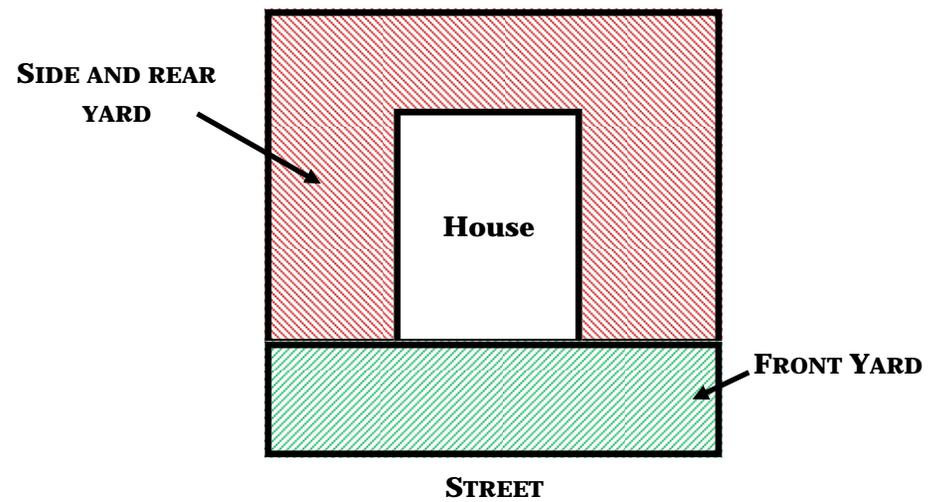
BALUSTRADES

Balustrades are comprised of three pieces: a top rail, a bottom rail, and a baluster. When replacing a balustrade it is important to take into consideration style and character of the structure, as well as, existing building code. It was not unusual for porches to be open and not have a balustrade. When installing a new balustrade it should be sympathetic to the architectural style or have simplified detailing.

TOP RAIL AND BOTTOM RAIL



FRONT AND REAR YARDS



The move towards rear yards can be traced back to the 1940s. Prior to World War II (WWII) America adopted a policy of isolation, the country would not align itself with any foreign countries nor get involved in any war outside of the western hemisphere. After WWII, in 1944, Congress passed the G.I. Bill allowing returning veterans access to low cost mortgages. The economic incentives combined with the newly improved highway and interstate infrastructure helped to fuel a suburban housing market. So-called "Levittowns", named for the brothers William and Alfred Levitt, consisting of identical homes, white picket fences, green lawn and modern kitchens were constructed across America. These rapidly built homes offered an alternative to the cramped living quarters on the city, were economical in size and featured larger yards in the front and more importantly, in the rear

At the same time there was sharp focus of domestic issues. America's involvement in war had deep social implications. Access to low-cost mortgages and a prospering post war economy allowed for the expansion of the American middle class. An emphasis was placed on the nuclear family. With the looming Cold War, families began to enjoy the privacy that came with large backyards. Large rear yards could provided occupants with both protection and food. Air raid shelters could be constructed in case of nuclear fallout. The backyard became both a place to escape the perils of the war and symbolic of the "American Dream".

FENCES

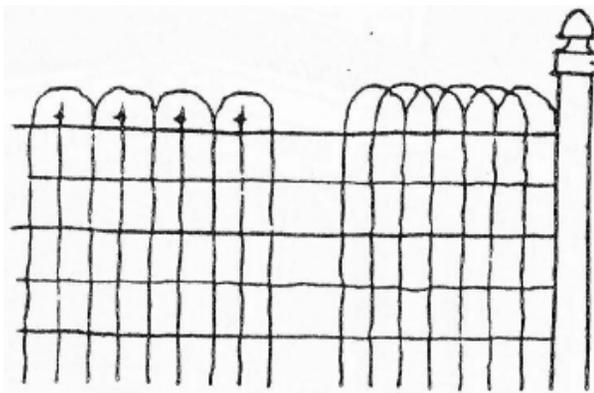
Front yard fencing was typically reserved for substantial or high style houses. Fencing front yards fell out of favor during the Arts and Crafts period and by the 1940s almost no one fenced their front, but rear yards were almost always fenced. Double loop wire fences were very popular at the turn of the century. As Arts and Crafts style structures became popular the iron fences most likely would have been on a masonry base and in front of a high style house. As for design, geometric earth designs were much more popular during the 1920's-1940's. Scroll work went out of style and didn't reappear until the 1960's. Front yard fences are typically 4 feet in height and at least 50% open. Side and rear yard fences may be opaque and between 6 and 8 feet in height.

APPROPRIATE FRONT YARD FENCES

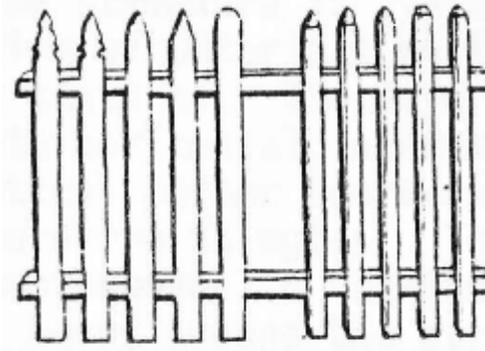


LEFT: A simple 4 foot high iron picket fence with simple finials and no decorative elements.

BELOW: Traditional wire mesh fences are only allowed with a Board of Adjustments variance; however, the 4 foot high iron loop fence with simple finials is an appropriate alternative.



LEFT: A 4 foot high iron picket fence with geometric shapes and simple finials.



*flat square
wood picket*

LEFT: 4 feet high wood fences are appropriate for the front yard. Wood fences at the front yard must be at least 50% open and can either be a flat or square picket.

BELOW: Traditional flat picket fence.



ABOVE: This high style structure's front yard is enclosed by a wood square picket fence with a pedestrian gate to match

APPROPRIATE SIDE AND REAR YARD FENCES



LEFT: 6 to 8 foot high wood privacy fences are appropriate for side and rear yards.



LEFT: It is preferable for wood privacy fences to be capped. The wood cap helps to shed water, increasing the longevity of the fence.



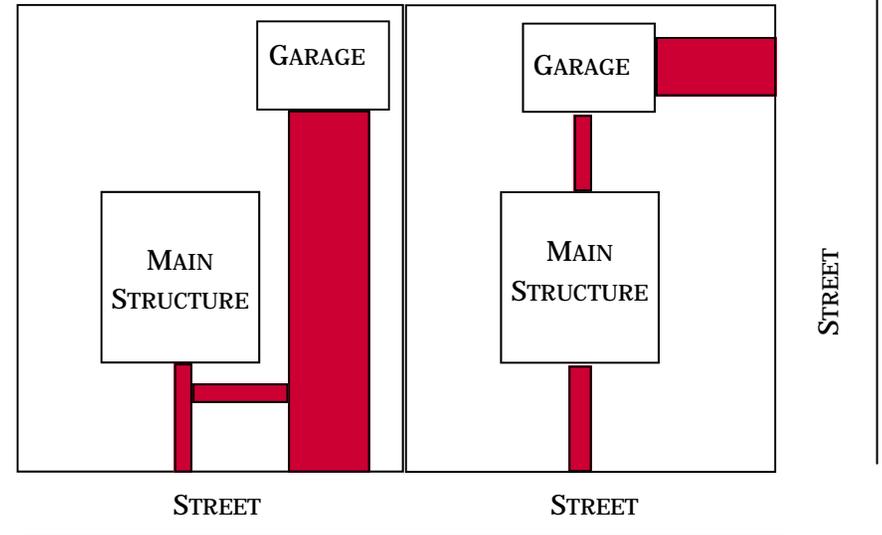
LEFT: Like front yard fencing, simple iron picket fences with geometric shapes and simple finials are appropriate for side and rear yards and can have an increased height of 6 to 8 feet.

PAVING

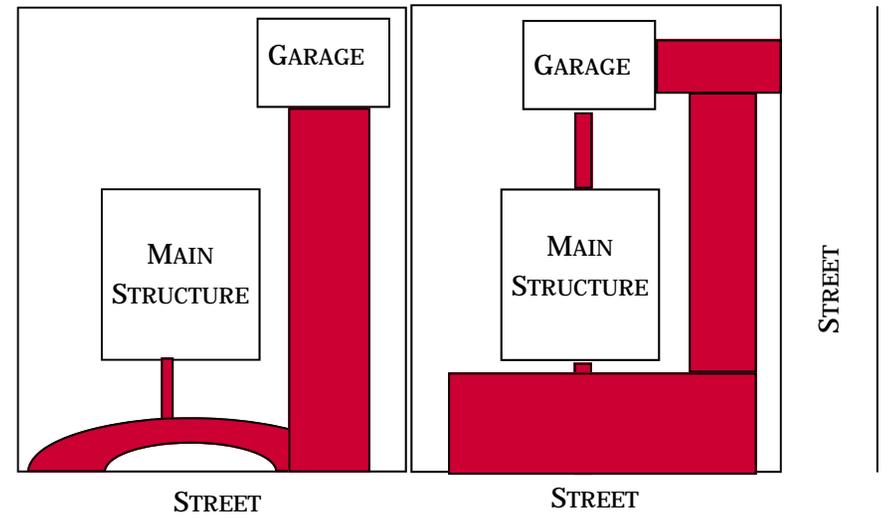
DRIVEWAYS AND WALKWAYS

Paving should be kept minimal and should not disrupt the rhythm of the streetscape. The following are illustrations of appropriate and inappropriate paving patterns.

APPROPRIATE



INAPPROPRIATE



Porch Standards

(Required)

1. Original porch and other outdoor space components (columns, railing, skirting, decking and soffit) shall be maintained.
2. When necessary, porch and other outdoor space components (columns, railing, skirting, decking and soffit) replacement shall match existing in size, material, profile, exposure, detail, relief and dimension.
3. Primary porches such as first floor front porches shall not be enclosed.
4. Secondary porches such as second story and rear porches may be enclosed by screens only.
5. Porch flooring shall be 3 ½" tongue and groove wood installed with a floor-nailer and corners on a wrap-around porch shall be mitered.
6. Synthetic tongue and groove flooring may be approved provided that it match existing in size, material, profile, exposure, detail, relief and dimension.
7. Porch railings shall be made of wood or masonry and be typical and appropriate to the style of the structure.
8. Metal handrails shall be reviewed on a case by case basis and shall be simple in design and detailing.
9. Columns shall be masonry or wood and of a style and material typical of the period and style of the structure.
10. Synthetic columns may be substituted for wood provided that they match size, profile, exposure, detail, relief and dimension and are typical of the period and style of the structure.
11. Decks, patios and courtyards shall be not be visible from the public right of way.
12. Enclosed decks, second story or rooftop decks shall not be visible from the public right of way.

Paving Standards

(Required)

13. Paving of private sidewalks and driveways shall be of natural concrete, brick, cut stone, pavers, or natural rock or asphalt.
14. In no instance shall the front yard of any lot be paved or graveled except for a driveway or walkways.
15. There shall be no front yard area designated as a vehicle parking area or paved as such.
16. Walkway paving in the front yard shall be:
 - A walkway from the front property line to the front entry of the structure or, on a corner lot, from the side property line to a side entry of the structure.
 - The walkway shall not be wider than the width of the entry steps and in no instance shall the walkway be wider than ten (10) feet.
 - A walkway from the driveway to the front and/or side entry walkway. Shall be a maximum of four (4) feet in width.
17. A front entry driveway shall be no wider than one car width or ten (10) feet maximum but may widened just prior to a two car garage.
18. A front entry driveway may extend along the side of the residence or structure, through the Porte Cochere if applicable, to the garage or out-building, or to the rear yard.
19. On a corner lot, the driveway may extend from the side street to the garage. It shall be no wider than one car width or ten (10) feet maximum to a one-car garage, or eighteen (18) feet maximum and widening to a two car garage.
20. Circular and semicircular driveways are prohibited.
21. Driveways shall be not be widened or extended into the project fronted yard.
22. Ribbon driveways are permitted, provided that the paved ribbons are no greater than three (3) feet in width.
21. Any new driveway constructed through a front yard must be spaced a minimum of one (1) foot from an existing driveway on the adjacent lot.

FENCE STANDARDS

(Required)

22. Front yard fences shall be a maximum height of four (4) feet, 50% open and compatible to the architectural style of the primary structure.
23. Side and rear yard fences shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet.
24. Side yard fences shall not project into the projected front yard.
25. Fence materials shall be wood, antique wire fencing, or iron.
26. Plastic, chain link, barbed wire, or other synthetic materials used as fencing is prohibited.
27. Masonry may be used for posts and bases for metal iron fencing only.

LIGHTING STANDARDS

(Required)

28. Placement of outdoor security lights and their mounting shall not damage, detract from, or conceal significant features of the structure.
29. Porch fans shall be mounted in a manner that will not damage, detract from, or conceal significant features of the structure and shall be simple in design.
30. Lighting installed at the front porch shall be compatible in age, style and scale to the building or unobtrusive and not suggestive of a style or age. Their mounting shall not damage, detract from, or conceal significant features of the structure.

OTHER APPLICABLE STANDARDS

(Required)

31. Stairs providing entrance to a second story shall not be visible from the public right of way on primary structures.
32. Pergolas must be historically appropriate and compatible to the style of the existing structure.
33. Mechanical equipment (air conditioning units, and satellite dishes) located in the yard shall not be visible from the public right of way.

OUTDOOR SPACE GUIDELINES

(Recommended not required)

1. The use of the front and side yards should be reserved for landscaping.
2. The parkway between the sidewalk and the curb shall be reserved for landscaping.
3. Care should be taken to preserve existing trees or replant with long-living trees.
4. Mailboxes should be typical of the style and period of the structure and be affixed to the front of structure.
5. Ramps installed for access or mobility purposes should be made of wood. Care should be taken not to detract from the design of the structure.

Additional Resources

- A Field Guide to American Home by Virginia and Lee McAlester
- Bungalow Details: Exterior by Jane Powell and Linda Svendsen
- NPS Preservation Brief #17: Architectural Character— Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character
- NPS Preservation Brief #32: Making Historic Properties Accessible
- NPS Preservation Brief #45: Preserving Historic Wood Porches
- Old House Journal: Porch Details by Brent Hull