

## 4.8 Porch, Canopy and Porte-Cochere Design Guidelines



### 4.8.1 INTRODUCTION

Porches and canopies were popular features in historic residential and commercial buildings; they protect entrances from rain and much needed provide shade in the north Texas summers. They also provide a sense of scale to the façade of a building and catch breezes in the warmer months. Finally, porches connect a house or commercial building to its context by orientating the entrance to the street.

Because of their historic importance and prominence as character-defining features, porches, canopies and porte-cocheres should be preserved.

### 4.8.2 PORCHES

Porches are historically important features and are often the dominant characteristic of most residential buildings. The various components of porches, including steps, railings and columns, provide scale and detail to historic buildings.

Porches are normally constructed in either of two ways: one or more external walls has been

omitted under the principal house roof to give an inset porch, or a porch is created by an additional roof which is relatively independent of the main roof. Both types are common in houses in Grapevine.



INSET PORCH at an ARTS & CRAFTS HOUSE



**PORCH w/ SEPARATE ROOF at a FOLK VICTORIAN HOUSE**



**SMALL WRAP AROUND PORCH at a FOLK VICTORIAN HOUSE**

Porches come in all shapes and sizes – wide; narrow, across the entire front of the house, a small porch at the el (inside corner) of a house, or as a wrap around porch that literally ‘wraps around’ two adjacent facades of a house.

Because the elimination or enclosure of a front or side porch alters the character of a building significantly, it is not considered appropriate.

Creating a false historical appearance through the application of new elements and details to a porch or balcony is also considered inappropriate, as is adding a porch to a prominent elevation where none historically existed.



**PORCH AT A FRONT GABLE at a CRAFTSMAN HOUSE**

Reconstruction of a missing porch should be based on accurate evidence of the original configuration, placement and detail and supplemented with historic photographs that show the original porch. Research at the library, published historic documents and books, resources at the City of Grapevine, previous owners of the house and local historic organizations may be able to find or help locate historic photographs.



**LARGE WRAP AROUND PORCH**



**TWO-STORY PORCH at a NEW BUILDING**

If no photographs or other documentation is available, and it is desired to rebuild a porch where there was one originally, similar houses in the neighborhood should be canvassed to determine elements that are common to most;

these can then be incorporated into a new porch design.

#### **4.8.3 PORCH ELEMENTS – COLUMNS, RAILINGS, FLOORING, ETC.**

The various elements of a porch contribute greatly to the historic character of the porch and the house: columns, railings, column brackets, fascia or cornice mold at the porch roof and steps. Each of these elements may be simple in design (typical in Folk Victorian house), more ornate as in Queen Anne styles, or articulated and ‘earthy’ as in Arts & Crafts houses.

Columns at porches typically relate to the building in some manner – in the use of the same or similar materials and their details. These supporting members (piers or columns) can be wood, masonry or metal and provide rich opportunities for decorative embellishments on the façade.

Porch columns can be classical in design and extend from the porch floor to the ceiling or porch beam. They can also be of wood, turned as in turned spindles; this is typical in Queen Anne and Folk Victorian style houses and often referred to as ‘posts’. Craftsman and bungalow homes typically have columns with piers – these are of brick or stone with wood half-columns on top.



**BATTERED BRICK COLUMN w/  
GUTTER AND DOWNSPOUT**



**COLUMN w/ BRICK PIER and  
WOOD COLUMN ABOVE**

Unless it was historically used on a structure, wrought iron or metal pipe is inappropriate for porch columns and should not be used.

When porches are elevated above the adjacent yard or lawn area, a railing or low wall, usually with an open framework to admit breezes, is provided for safety. These railings or walls are typically constructed of wood, but can be constructed of masonry when the house has a full or partial brick exterior, either in brick veneer or load-bearing construction. In other houses, these railings are typically wood; they often vary in materials, height, details, and color and are individual to each house.

The spacing and height of railing balusters is important to the character of the house; these were typically spaced closely together and the railings were relatively low (less than 30” high). The proportion of replacement or replicated balusters should match the original house.



**WOOD PORCH RAILING w/  
ORNAMENTATION IN CENTER  
OF EACH BAY**



**WOOD TURNED BALUSTERS IN  
A QUEEN ANNE HOUSE**



**COLUMN BRACKET**

Porch flooring should closely match the original tongue-and-groove wood flooring dimensions. Do not use over-sized boards (2" thick) for porch floors; ¾" to 1" thick tongue-and-groove boards are generally appropriate.

A maximum gap of 1/16" should be left between boards to allow for expansion.

Do not cover original porch floors of wood or concrete with carpet, or other surface material.

#### **4.8.4 CANOPIES**

A canopy is a projecting roof structure that shelters an entrance to a building; these occur at commercial buildings in Grapevine's Main Street, and provided protection from the weather to customers of the commercial building. More importantly, canopies also provided shade in the summer over the retail windows and storefronts, encouraging customers to window shop in a somewhat cooler environment.

Like porches in residential buildings, canopies are historically important features and are often the dominant characteristic of a commercial building.

Canopies can be quite simple in design and made of sheet metal, pressed metal, wood or other materials.



**CANOPY (OR AWNING) OF  
CORRAGATED OR 'ROLLED'  
METAL w/ LIGHTWEIGHT  
METAL FRAME**

Canopies come in all shapes and sizes – they typically project from the building and are supported by metal rods, chains, wires, but occasionally are supported by wood or metal columns. They also typically extend across the entire building façade but occasionally extend just over the building entry.

Because the elimination of a historic canopy alters the character of a building significantly, this is not considered appropriate or permitted.

And application of new elements and details to a canopy to ‘dress it up’ is also considered inappropriate, as is adding a canopy to a building where none historically existed.



**METAL CANOPY**



**CANOPY W/ COLUMNS**

Reconstruction of a missing canopy should be based on accurate evidence of the original configuration, placement and detail and supplemented with historic photographs that show the original canopy. Research at the library, published historic documents and books, resources at the City of Grapevine, previous owners of the building and local historic organizations may be able to find or help locate historic photographs.

#### **4.8.5 PORTE COCHERES**

A Porte-cochere is a covered area over a driveway at a building entrance; this is typically used for vehicular parking at a house.



**PORTE COCHERE AT A HOUSE**

Porte-cocheres are historically important features and are a dominant characteristic of those residential buildings where they occur. The various components of porte-cocheres, including roof, columns, railings and steps, provide scale and detail to historic buildings similar to those elements at porches.

Porte-cocheres are typically an extension of a porch roof, and create an independent massing to a house.

Because the elimination or enclosure of a porte-cochere alters the character of a building significantly, it is not considered appropriate.

Creating a false historical appearance through the application of new elements and details to a porte-cochere is also considered inappropriate, as is adding a porte-cochere a building where none historically existed.

As with a porch, reconstruction of a missing porte-cochere should be based on accurate evidence of the original configuration, placement and detail and supplemented with historic photographs that show the original porte-cochere. Research at the library, published historic documents and books, resources at the City of Grapevine, previous owners of the house and local historic organizations may be able to find or help locate historic photographs.

If no photographs or other documentation is available, and it is desired to rebuild a porch where there was one originally, similar houses in the neighborhood should be canvassed to determine elements that are common to most; these can then be incorporated into a new porch design.

#### **4.8.6 TRELLIS, AWNINGS AND SIMILAR BUILDING ELEMENTS**

Within any residential historic district, there may be other building components that are unique and not widely used, such as trellis, awnings or similar elements.

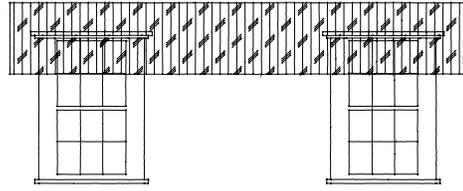
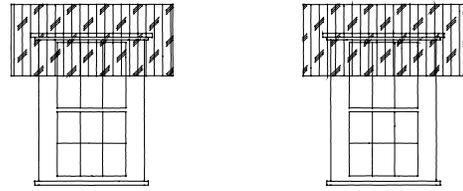
As with porches and porte-cocheres, these original elements are historically important features and may be a dominant characteristic of a residential building.

Refer to porch and porte-cochere descriptions earlier in this chapter for detailed information about repair and replacement of such elements.

Awnings at commercial buildings are addressed in the *Storefront* chapter within these Guidelines.

Awnings at residential buildings are used to provide protection from the summer sun, and are often found on south west-facing windows. Awnings should be fabric or canvas on a metal frame and located over individual windows. These are available in frames that can be removed or folded up during the winter months to allow the sun to come into the window.

Awnings shall not be continuous across a façade, but rather relate to each window or bay. The above rhythm of awnings is typical of residential applications.



**RESIDENTIAL AWNING RYTHMN**

Some historic wood awnings remain in place within the historic areas; these are unusual and should be maintained and retained in place.

Occasionally awnings are located over rear doors to provide protection from the elements for the occupants and visitors as they enter and leave.



**CANVAS AWNING OVER SINGLE WINDOW**