



Old Orland Historic District

PORCHES

Porches were important features on many Old Orland houses. Some porches were very simple, consisting of just a stoop and a handrail at the front entrance, sometimes with a roof or canopy and sometimes not. They did not become common architectural elements until the mid-19th century. For the most part, porches could date from any period and can be found on some of the oldest and some of the most recent houses.

From the mid-19th Century until well into the 20th Century, porches were often major architectural elements that could be considerably more ornamented and decorative than the house itself. Lathe-turned and saw-cut columns, panels, posts, brackets and other elements became common on many porches.

In the early 20th Century, porches generally were simplified and more integrated into the design of the house. It was common to find such porches built onto older houses that either did not have porches originally or where original porches had been removed and replaced.

In some cases, porches were recessed under the slope of the roof or into the mass of the house, thus making the porch much more an integral part of the house's design rather than an added-on feature. This form of porch was particularly common on Bungalow and Craftsman style houses, some of which can be found south of Old Orland along West Avenue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Retain original porch elements as much as possible; try to duplicate them in kind if they are damaged, deteriorated, or missing. Avoid removing original elements such as turned columns or decorative elements. Wrought or cast iron supports should not be used to replace original porch columns unless such iron elements were part of the original design; the same is true for wrought iron railings.
2. Because many porches project out from the wall of a house and are exposed to the weather, watch for signs of deterioration due to moisture: streaking or staining; mildew or dry rot; and moss growth or peeling paint. Be sure there are no gaps or leaks in the flashing at the point where the porch roof abuts the house wall; and watch for overflowing gutters or leaking downspouts that might spill water onto porch elements or into the porch's foundation.
3. Avoid enclosing porches to create permanent interior space. This alters the open character a porch is intended to have and effectively moves the building wall forward from its original plane. Such work also often results in loss of or damage to decorative porch elements which are an important part of a house's architectural character.
4. If a porch is to be added where one is missing or where there has not been a porch in the past, use a simple, contemporary design. Observe the characteristics of original porches on similar buildings – height, materials, roof slope, and width—and use these to develop a design. Avoid ornaments such as spindles and scrollwork unless they were traditionally used on porches of similar buildings.