

A Welcoming First Impression

A Guide to Porch Maintenance & Repair in the City of South Euclid

The homes of South Euclid were built from the 1910's through the 1960's. Styles include Craftsman Bungalow, Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch. Major growth in the area occurred after World War II at a time when the Minimal Traditional style was popular. This style first appeared during the Great Depression. It drew influence from Colonial and Tudor forms, but incorporated minimal ornamentation. Minimal Traditional homes had low or intermediate roof pitches, while the eaves and rakes were close. They also generally had a large chimney and at least one front-facing gable.

South Euclid homes were commonly clad with wood, brick, stone, or a mixture of these materials. They had one or two stories, with two stories seen less often. These houses typically did not have front porches, but rather a stoop with a simple iron railing.

Over time, parts of these homes slowly decay and need to be replaced. The most obvious degrading happens on the front of the house, especially the front porch or stoop and doorway. The entrance to the house is the first impression one gets before crossing the threshold and is therefore important to maintain.



Metal railings are typical of partial width porches as well as stoops. Doorways with stoops can have awnings, but they were not always featured with them.

These are NOT appropriate porches or porch fixes:



2 x 4 boards were not part of the original design and look like they are temporary.



Wrought iron is not an appropriate substitute for wooden columns.



This ramp covers the original front stoop and the 2 x 4s do not match the style of the house.



The railings on the step are flimsy and dangerous without appropriate spindles.

Feature	Dimensional Criteria
Minimum width clear of all obstructions [except projections not more than 114mm (4 1/2 in.) at or below handrail height on each side.]	36 in.
Maximum height of Risers	8 1/4 in.
Minimum Tread depth	9 in.
Minimum Headroom	6 ft. 8in.

- The treads and landings cannot have a slope of more than a 2%.
- If there are four risers, one side of the stairs needs a handrail.
- If the stairs are open and more than 30 inches in above the grade, there needs to be a 34 inch handrail.
- All exterior footings should be placed at least 12 inches below the undisturbed ground surface and protected from frost by extending below the frost line.

Concrete Step Repair



Concrete steps are fairly durable, but every now and again they chip and break. Some repairs can be made by the homeowner, such as repairing cracks and small chips. To repair cracks in the stairs, you will need to patch the cracks with grout. To begin, clean the crack of any dirt or debris. Next, moisten the spot you want to repair. Mix up the bonding agent as provided by the directions on its packaging. Apply the mixture to the crack with a putty knife forcing grout into the crack as much as possible and then smooth out the mixture so it is flush with the step. Spray the grout with water so that it dries out slow, preventing it from cracking. While allowing the grout to dry, cover it with plastic or a wooden board.

Concrete stairs that have chipped corners are more challenging, but can still be fixed by a DIY homeowner. Similar to repairing cracks, the surface area must be clean and free of debris. Sufficiently cover the chipped corner using a liberal amount of a latex bonding liquid to ensure a secure bond between the existing material and new cement patch. Mix the cement with a trowel according to the package instructions. The mixture should be firm so that it does not run when applied to the surface. Pack the cement into the chipped surface, making sure that no gaps or air bubbles remain. Smooth out the excess cement so that it is level with the existing step. If a large section of the corner is missing, then a form may be required. Homeowners should call a masonry or concrete contractor if cracks or chips are extensive.



Wrought Iron Handrail Upkeep

Maintaining an original front porch is usually an ongoing process. Keeping it historically accurate requires research and a sensitive approach to repair work. Historic wrought iron handrails are one feature that require continual care. They should be washed periodically with soapy water. To remove rust, scrub the rails with a soft chemical agent using a mild brush. Do not use any product that might scratch the surface of the metal. To remove any further rust, take fine quality sand paper to the corrosion and sand until free metal is seen. Then rewash the railings with water and let air dry. After the washing, apply a coat of primer paint to the areas that were covered with rust, followed by a coat of long-lasting exterior paint for metal on the railings and posts.

Second Story Porches

Many homes in South Euclid have a second story porch on the front or rear. As the city's building code reinforces, these porches require railings in order to be safely accessed. Careful consideration should be given for the type and style of railings on second story porches.

Appropriate Railings



Suitable railings for second story porches should be made of wood or wrought iron and include a top and bottom rail. Ball, pyramid or square-top corner posts add architectural detail to the porch railing. Since wood will deteriorate when exposed to the elements, it is critical that wood railings be regularly maintained and painted.

Inappropriate Railings



Deck railing and fencing do not add to the house's historic charm, but rather take away from it. Wooden railing exposed to the elements is not durable.

Prepared by the Cleveland Restoration Society.

If you have additional questions or would like a site visit or a low-interest loan, please call the Heritage Home Program at (216) 426-1000.

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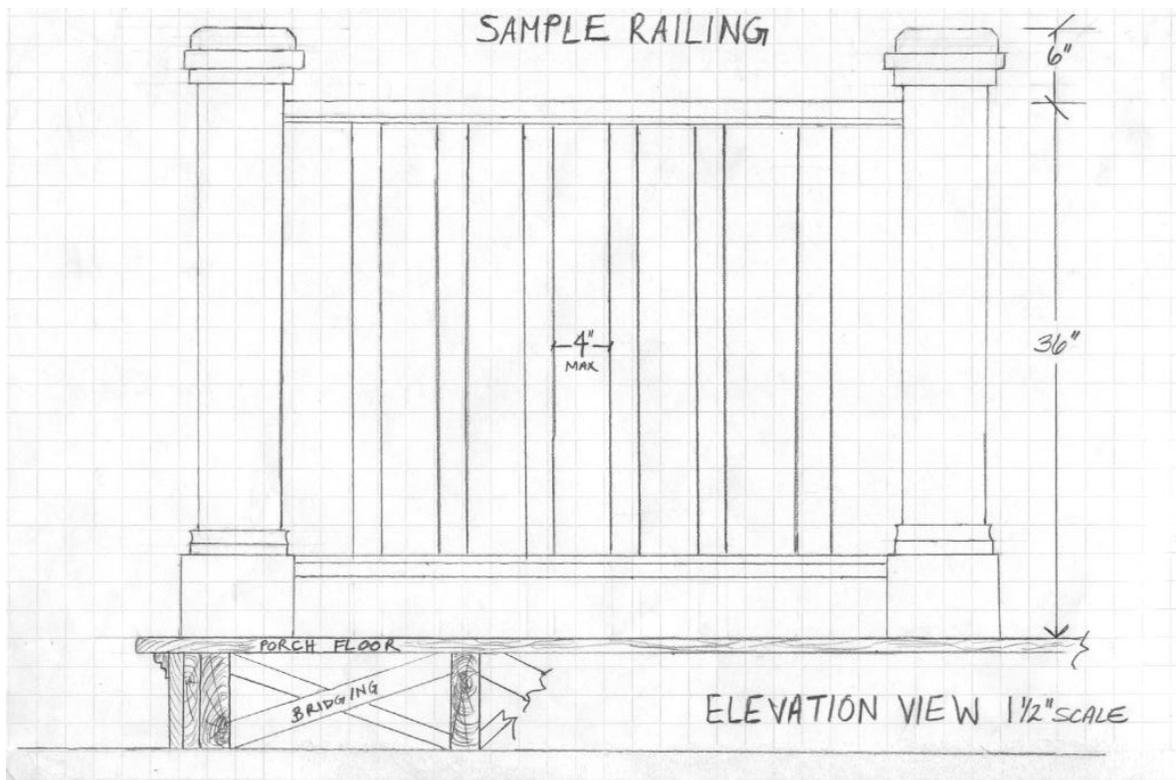
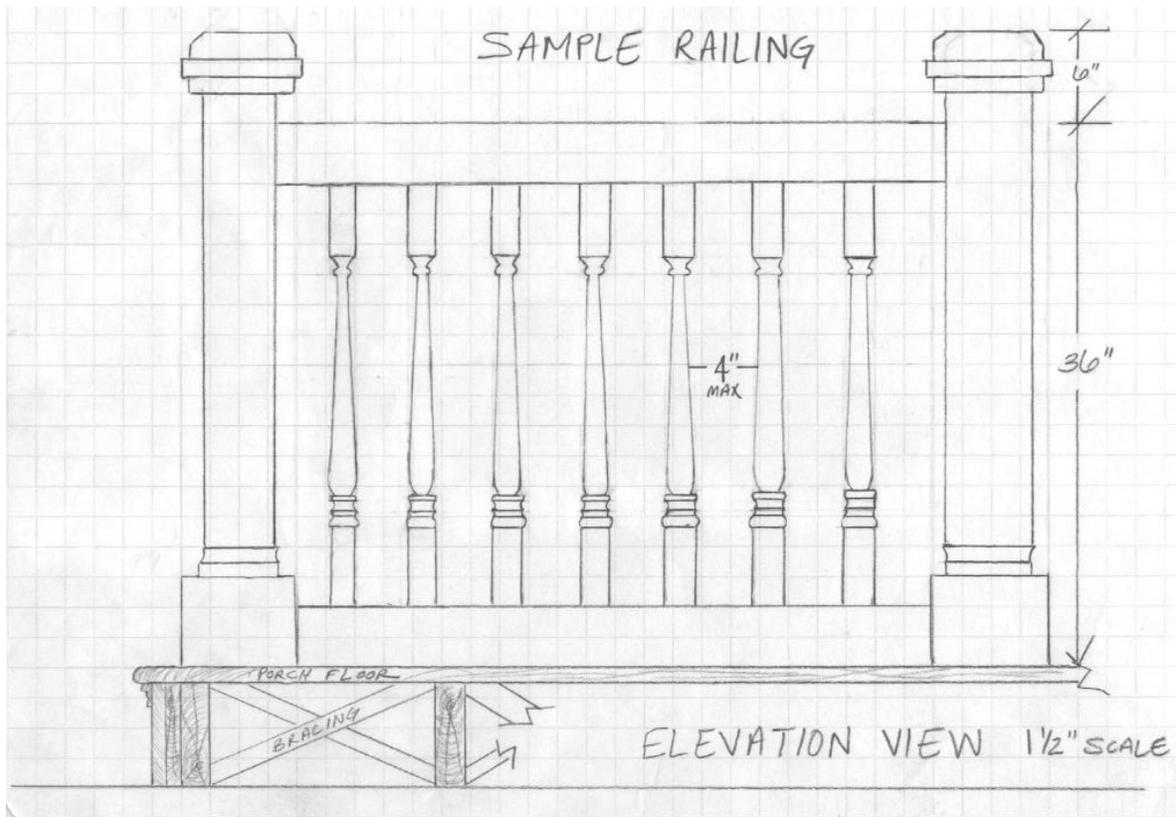
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Diagrams of Appropriate Porch Railing Styles



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