



Certificate of Appropriateness

Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission / 841 N Broadway, B1 / Milwaukee, WI 53202
hpc@milwaukee.gov / 414-286-5712 / 414-286-5722

Address

2251 N Lake Drive

Property/District Name

North Point South HD

Description of Work

Repair lower front porch and enlarge front steps. Remove existing skirt slats and coverboards. Remove stairs. Cut new skirting slats and coverboards from clear, vertical grain cedar. Wood to be primed on all sides prior to installation. Install new skirting materials following existing layout. Frame new stairs with 2x12 stringers. New stairs to be set wider, so that rail runs straight down from columns and so that stairs lands on full width of existing concrete. Install new ipe treads and clear cedar risers. Caulk as needed; fill nail holes. Paint with at least two coats of Sherwin Williams Emerald, matching existing color.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 320-21 (11) and (12) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission has issued a certificate of appropriateness for the work listed above. The work was found to be consistent with preservation guidelines.

The following conditions apply to this certificate of appropriateness:

- Reuse or match existing handrail balusters and grippable top rails.
- All finish wood must be smooth and free of knots and must be painted or treated with an opaque stain upon completion. Note: when new, bare wood is left exposed to the exterior elements for a period of only a week or two, the life the of the paint job subsequently applied to it will be decreased. The use of a decay-resistant wood for is required for porch areas.
- New stairs and railings/guards must comply with Wisconsin UDC see attached DNS handout and [SPS 321.04](#).

All work must be done in a craftsman-like manner. Staff must approve any changes or additions to this certificate before work begins. Work that is not completed in accordance with this certificate may be subject to correction orders or citations.

Permits and timeline

You are responsible for determining if permits are required and obtaining them prior to commencing work. Consult the Development Center on the web or by telephone for details: www.milwaukee.gov/lms - (414) 286-8210. If permits are not required, work must be completed within one year of the date this certificate was issued. If permits are required, permits must be obtained within one year of the date this certificate was issued.

City of Milwaukee Historic Preservation



Present conditions.

Date issued: 5/15/2026

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Stairs – One and Two Family Home

809 N. Broadway, 1st Floor / Milwaukee, WI 53202-3617 / 414-286-8210

Stairs are a major source of deaths and serious injuries in the home. Studies have estimated that stair riser/tread dimensions are factors in nearly 50 % of all stair-related injuries in the home.

Proper layout and construction of stairs is one of the most complicated building tasks you can undertake. This information sheet was written to inform you of the *code requirements* of stairs, not how to properly construct them. There are many good books and other resources on proper stair layout available at the library and at home improvement stores.

Stair construction

Stairs consist of stringers, treads, risers, and railings. The stringers are made from 2 x 12 material, are installed at a diagonal, and have vertical and horizontal notches cut out on which to fasten the treads and risers.

You can buy pre-cut stringers at a home improvement store, but they probably won't fit the exact dimensions of your particular situation.

Code requirements

- Stairs must be at least 36" wide.
- Handrails can project into that 36" by 4-1/2" on each side.
- Stairs must have headroom clearance of at least 6'-4".
- Risers cannot be higher than 8", and no less than 4".
- Treads must be at least 9" deep.
- Within a flight of stairs, treads and risers cannot vary by more than 3/16".
- Guardrails are always horizontal and are placed around stair openings or around the edges of a porch or deck. Guardrails must be at least 36" high.

- Handrails are the railings that go down the stairs. Handrails can be between 30" and 38" high. There are very strict code requirements for handrail design and installation.
- There can be no openings anywhere in the railing system larger than 4".
- Landings usually must be provided at the top and bottom of every flight of stairs, must be as wide as the stairs and at least 3' deep.

There are additional code requirements for winding or curved stairs, spiral stairs, ladder-type exits, basement window exits, and curved or irregular landings. Please refer to the State of Wisconsin Uniform Dwelling Code for the requirements for these types of special stair situations.

Submitting plans

You do not need to submit plans to repair or replace a porch or a deck unless you are increasing the size. In that case, the plan examiner will need to see a site plan or survey of your property to determine if the increase conforms to the setback requirements of the City of Milwaukee zoning code.

After you get your permit, contact your building inspector if you need some assistance in properly laying out your stairs.

(See our other information sheet on "decks")