

Texas Porch Echoes Deco

Built in the 1920s, this house is located in Dallas, Texas, in the Swiss Avenue Historic District. When the homeowners contacted Kelly Hanna, owner of Art Deck-O, to bid on building a back porch, one of their conditions was that the project be completed before the local annual home tour, since their house was part of that event. As it turned out, Hanna removed the last load of tools from the property just 11 hours before the tour was to begin.

The two-story porch that the Art Deck-O crew built (bottom two photos) recalls porches popular in the late 1900s through the early part of the twentieth century that had a second-floor “dust porch” used for beating carpets and the like. To make sure the porch’s style suited the house, the Art Deck-O crew echoed elements from the existing front entry porch (top two photos). For one, they replicated its columns’ geometric, stepped motif — fairly common on area homes built in the 1920s and 1930s and in keeping with the style that later became known as Art Deco — on the



back porch columns and rail posts. The motif was modified by lowering its placement on the columns and setting it off with an upper ring. Trim, with a geometric aspect similar to the dentil motif on the front entry, and a beadboard ceiling above the lower porch further tie the package together.

The project took seven weeks, from demo of the old deck to the final paintbrush stroke; three workers were on site for the first six weeks, and four for the finishing stage. The only surprise was

a 4-inch by 8-foot by 20-foot slab hiding under the old deck, which was unusual for a house of this period. Three guys and six hours later, the slab was history.

All the posts, including those adjacent to the house’s exterior wall, are structural — the upstairs floor joists end at the back of the house and there’s no band joist to attach to. The crew set 16-foot-long 6x6 posts in 3-foot by 1-foot holes using 160 pounds of concrete in each. The framing is pressure-treated pine — 2x8 beams every 6 feet and 2x6 joists 16 inches on-center. For the decking, ipe 1x4s were faced-screwed with 2½-inch stainless steel screws. The 1/12-pitch roof over the first floor is shingled with roll roofing, and Z flashing at the house was set in grooves in the brick. Upstairs, the band fascia is Hardie Soffit board. — Laurie Elden



ALL PHOTOS BY KELLY HANNA