

Design of Railing Configurations with Front Step Pillars



By Neil Thorslund

"Uniqueness is what makes you the most beautiful."

— **Lea Michele**

Front step pillars are very common in many home designs, however choosing the correct railing configuration for your pillar style can be challenging. One of the most common problems is deciding how to install a railing on a front step that wasn't designed to have a railing. The decision depends on many factors, including pillar location, pillar covering, front step layout and stair height. Some railing configuration may not comply with the specified building code, which is why it is important to first consult with an expert before installation.

Why can't the railing be bracketed to the pillar directly?

In many cases, the railing actually can be bracketed to the pillar, however there are two cases where this may not be viable.

1. The pillar location

If the pillar is located near the centre of the steps, bracketing to the pillar may affect the continuity of the railing. The building code states that the railing must be continuous from the first step to the landing, and if the railing is separated by a large pillar, the inspector may argue that the railing is not graspable along the full length.

2. The pillar covering

This problem arises when the pillar is covered with cultured stone or brick. Cultured stone is a very rough and uneven surface, meaning that the wall bracket will not sit flat, and can therefore not be secured correctly. When the pillar is made from bricks, the bricks may crack during installation.

"Uniqueness is what makes you the most beautiful."

— **Lea Michele**

We always recommend putting a post next to the pillar, to avoid these potential issues.



What are the advantages of aluminum pillars?

Pillars add to the aesthetic of your steps or patio as well as providing structural support. They can be used with low ceilings, or to hold plants or lights. Pillars often add to curb appeal and therefore saleability of your house.

Aluminum columns have many advantages, including:

Style: aluminum blends in with a variety of exterior design such as modern, or classic

Durability: there is no need to regularly maintain or repair aluminum columns since they don't warp, rot, rust, or corrode.

Expense: because they need little to no upkeep, they don't come with continued expenses.

Strength: aluminum is a great choice for supporting balconies, or other covered walkways.

Versatility: aluminum columns work well with homes, cottages, or small businesses.

