

The Outer Banks Real Estate Register

Feb. 2011



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Outer Banks Real Estate



DECKS AND RAILINGS

Decks make a house at the beach a beach house. After showing thousands of homes, talking with dozens of contractors, negotiating countless home inspection reports, and repairing decks on my own properties, I have a few insights and opinions to share about decks and railings at the beach.

Style The decks and railings can greatly enhance the curb appeal of a home. The railings often have the biggest impact on the aesthetics. Vertical wood pickets are standard, but there has been a recent trend toward horizontal rails which can add a nostalgic look to a home. Stainless steel cables and glass panels add a modern and airy look to a home but are much more expensive and have unique maintenance issues.



Function The placement of the decks is key to determining how often they will be used and how much maintenance will be needed. Decks on the west and south sides of homes stay sunnier and hotter and will wear faster if not properly protected. Decks on the east and north sides of the homes have less sun and need washing to prevent buildup of algae and mildew. Having two decks on different sides of a home is very convenient with our windy conditions. The leeward deck is often very pleasant even when a deck in the wind is practically unusable.

Many decks are 8 feet wide which is economical to build and provides plenty of room to have a few chairs or a swing. If a deck is 10 or more feet wide, furniture placement options increase dramatically. Covered decks provide rain and sun protection. Built-in benches can be favorite spots if properly placed and designed.

Maintenance Wood decking can last for years if it is stained periodically. Recent advances in water-based "acrylic oil" stains make application fairly easy. Given the improvements in appearance and the dramatic protection that staining offers, it is an essential maintenance item for wood decking.

Composite decking offers the promise of less maintenance. Composite decking is generally a combination of plastic and fiber and one popular brand is "Trex." While beautiful, splinter free, and not requiring regular maintenance, composite decking will often stain or fade. The only way to fix these problems is to replace the decking. Given the large difference in initial cost, I recommend that most owners use wood.

The finish choice on wood railings is critical. Painted wood can dramatically improve the appearance of a home and give it a finished look. For renting or selling a house, this is usually a significant advantage. Painted rails will require regular repainting and attention. Stained wood can also enhance the aesthetics of a home and stain generally requires less maintenance. Bare wood is generally the least desirable since the wood weathers and splinters more quickly. Vinyl rails are increasingly popular. They offer a short term maintenance solution because they do not require regular painting. Claims that they last forever are not true on the beach. The plastic will degrade over time in the sun and if they have wood cores they are susceptible to rot. Stainless steel wires rust in the coastal environment. Lifetime guarantees on steel will guarantee that you are dealing with a warranty issue in 5 years.

In search of the best combination of aesthetics and maintenance, I had a railing with vertical copper pickets recently installed. My wife wanted vertical pickets because it is safer with the boys. I chose the copper so that the pickets could be as small as possible to emphasize the features of the house and they do not require treatment. I will stain the wood rather than paint this time so that I am not priming and painting and covering up rust spots from nails. Hopefully this is the perfect railing-- only time will tell!

RESTAURANTS YOU HAVEN'T TRIED (BUT DEFINITELY SHOULD!)

Seaside Vegetarian (252)255-5330 Mile Post 4.5 in Kitty Hawk Outstanding take out seafood and vegetarian dishes. The owner was previously the chef at Red Sky Café and the Roadside Café and now has his own place. Two thumbs up! www.seasidegourmet.com

Good Life Gourmet (252)480-2855 Mile Post 4.5 in Kitty Hawk The Good Life serves delicious food and has moved into what was formerly the Beach Bread Co. www.goodlifegourmet.com

UPCOMING SPRING EVENTS

OUTER BANKS TASTE OF THE BEACH

March 17th

www.obxtasteofthebeach.com
This is a grand food festival with tastings, cooking classes, celebrity appearances, and more!

22ND ANNUAL KELLY'S ST. PATRICKS DAY PARADE

March 20th

www.kellysrestaurant.com



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FEATURED LISTINGS

For Pre-Recorded Information, dial
(800)218-7984 + ext.



Oceanfront - Corolla
12 bedrooms, 11.2 baths
Outstanding curb appeal
MLS#69297 \$2,500,000
Ext. 1038



Oceanfront - Pine Island
9 bedrooms, 11.3 baths
Exceptionally appointed
MLS#67135 \$3,495,000
Ext. 1008



Oceanside—Duck
7 bedrooms, 7.1 baths
Close to beach and amenities
MLS#69026 \$899,000
Ext. 9908



Soundfront - Duck
5 bedrooms, 4.2 baths
Gorgeous sunsets
MLS#69526 \$995,000
Ext. 1068



Between Highways - KDH
4 bedrooms, 4.1 baths
Custom built as model home
MLS#60174 \$569,000
Ext. 1118



Oceanside—Duck
Lot in X Flood Zone
Subdivide into 2 lots
MLS#65159 \$495,000
Ext. 1148



Oceanfront—Corolla
5 bedrooms, 4.2 baths
Stunning ocean views
MLS#66042 \$1,375,000
Ext. 1298



Oceanside—Duck
5 bedrooms, 5.1 baths
Inviting amenities, many updates
MLS#67287 \$799,500
Ext. 9958

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