

GENEVA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - WINDOW POLICY

Policy Guide for Window Repair or Window Replacement Requests

Replacement windows are not a recommended treatment for historic buildings. To the greatest extent possible, the maintenance and preservation of original historic exterior materials should be encouraged in all cases. The replacement of windows frequently compromises the asesthetic integrity of a building through the removal of original architectural details and the alteration of the building's historic character and visual identification with a particular period or style of the past.

This window policy was developed by the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission in 2000 as a tool to aid property owners in selecting appropriate treatment for their project.

Contributing (or higher rated) buildings, Residential and Commercial.

Thoroughly assess the condition of the window sash and frame. Repair first, assuming windows are original or historic. If the assessment determines that repair is not feasible, replacements should be of materials, detailing and styling that are consistent with that of the original or existing historic windows.

2. Non-contributing buildings.

Thoroughly assess the condition of the window sash and frame. Repair first. If the assessment determines that repair is not feasible, the style and proportions of replacements should be consistent with building style, however more flexibility should be allowed in the window material.

3. Existing additions to contributing (or higher rated) buildings prominent and easily viewed from the street.

Thoroughly assess the condition of the window sash and frame. Repair first, assuming windows are original or historic. If the assessment determines that repair is not feasible, replacement should be of materials, detailing and styling that are consistent with that of the original or existing historic windows.

4. Existing additions to contributing (or higher rated) buildings not prominent or easily viewed from the street.

Thoroughly assess the condition of the window sash and frame. Repair first. If the assessment determines that repair is not feasible, the style and proportions of replacements should be consistent with building style, however more flexibility should be allowed in the window material. Original historic portion will always be addressed by #1.

5. New additions to contributing (or higher rated) buildings.

Windows should match material, detailing and styling of existing windows, if on prominent facade, but allowing for flexibility of materials if addition is not prominent or readily visible from the street. Original, historic portion will always be addressed by #1.

6. New additions to non-contributing buildings.

Windows should match material, detailing and styling of existing windows, if on prominent facade, but allowing for flexibility of materials if addition is not prominent or readily visible from the street.

7. New residential or commercial construction.

Flexibility should be allowed in material, however styling, detailing, spacing and proportions should be appropriate to the suggested architecture or styling of the new structure. Interior snap-in or false, between-pane grids, are not appropriate.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Geneva Historic Preservation Commission uses the Standards when reviewing specific rehabilitation projects in the Historic District. The following standards should be considered when dealing with historic windows.

Standard #2 The original distinguishing qualities or character of a building, structure or site and its environment shall not be

destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be

avoided when possible.

Standard #4 Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall

be retained and preserved.

Standard #5 Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a

historic property shall be preserved.

Standard #6 Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. In the event

replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design,

color, texture and other visual qualities.



Window Significance

Not all windows are equally significant. Factors determining significance include:

- Age of window
- Design of window
- Physical integrity
- Street facing façade
- Architectural and historical significance

Windows should be considered significant if they:

- 1. Are original or historic.
- Reflect the original design intent for the building.
- 3. Reflect period or regional styles or building practices.
- 4. Reflect changes to the building resulting from major periods or events.
- 5. Are examples of exceptional craftsmanship or design.

Window Facts

- Windows convey building character.
- They are made of irreplaceable materials.
- Windows need periodic maintenance.
- Renovation of windows is realistic and affordable.

Storm Windows

The use of exterior storm windows should be investigated whenever feasible because they are:

- 1. Thermally efficient
- Cost-effective
- 3. Reversible
- 4. Allow the retention of original windows

Interior storm windows are available and do work best in some situations.

Storm windows, in combination with historic windows, can provide better energy performance than most modern windows, which utilize insulating glass. Wood storm windows are preferred as wood has a better insulating value than metal. However, aluminum clad storm windows may be allowed provided they do not cover the trim. Storm windows can also provide significant protection from the weather to your historic windows. If old or historic storm windows exist, consider continuing to use them. Storm windows can also be placed on the inside of a window.

Weatherstripping is the single most cost-effective way to improve the energy performance of your windows.

Energy conservation is no excuse for the wholesale destruction of historic windows which can be made thermally efficient by historically and aesthetically acceptable means.

What is the Condition of Your Window?

When evaluating the physical condition of windows, look at the following:

- 1. Window location
- 2. Condition of paint
- 3. Condition of frame and sill
- 4. Condition of sash (rails, stiles and muntins)
- 5. Glazing problems
- 6. Hardware
- 7. Overal condition (excellent, good, fair, poor, etc.)

Moisture is the primary contributing factor in wooden window decay.

Failure of the paint should not be mistakenly interpreted as a sign that the wood is in poor condition and hence, irreparable. Wood is frequently in sound condition beneath unsightly paint.

Window Repair

Routine Maintenance needed to upgrade a window to "like new" condition normally includes the following:

- 1. Some degree of interior and exterior paint removal.
- 2. Removal and repair of sash (including reglazing and replacement of sash cords and chains, where necessary).
- 3. Repairs to the frame.
- 4. Weatherstripping or jamb liners and reinstallation of sash.
- 5. Repainting.



Window Replacement

Replacement windows should match historic windows in:

- Style and operation
- Dimensions
- Materials
- True-divided lite
- Clad wood windows are okay on secondary or tertiary facades
- Avoid bronze anodized aluminum

Look at the following when replacing windows:

- 1. Pattern and size of the openings
- 2. Proportions of the frame and sash
- 3. Configuration of window panes
- 4. Muntin profiles
- 5. Type of wood
- 6. Paint color
- 7. Characteristics of the glass
- 8. Other details (arched hoods, decorative elements, etc.)

Resources

- "Fixing Double-Hung Windows." Old House Journal (no. 12, 1979): 135.
- Look, David W. "Preservation Brief #10: Paint Removal from Historic Woodwork." Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1982.
- Phillips, Morgan and Selwyn, Judith. <u>Epoxies for Wood Repairs in Historic Buildings</u>. Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior (Government Printing Office, Stock No. 024-016-00095-1), 1978.
- "Sealing Leaky Windows." Old House Journal (no. 1, 1973): 5.
- Smith, Baird M. "Preservation Brief #3: Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings." Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1978.
- Myers, John H. "Preservation Brief #9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows." Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1981.
- Park, Sharon C. "Preservation Brief #13: The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows." Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.
- See the following web page to view the Preservation Briefs: http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983.
- NPS Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings:
 - http://www.gsa.gov/web/p/hptp.nsf/Guidelines+for+Rehabilitating+Historic+Buildings?OpenView
- Carmody, John, Heschong, Lisa and Selkowitz, Stephen. Residential Windows: A Guide to New Technologies and Energy Performance. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.
- Caring for Your Historic House. Heritage Preservation and National Park Service. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998.
- McAlester, Virginia and McAlester, Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.
- The Window Handbook: Successful Strategies for Rehabilitating Windows in Historic Buildings (16 different NPS Tech Notes on Windows).
- The Window Workbook for Historic Buildings (Companion to the Handbook, contains technical papers and listings for windows and restoration products).
- See the following web page to view the Preservation Tech Notes: http://www.gsa.gov/web/p/hptp.nsf/NPS+Preservation+Tech+Notes?OpenView
- New York Landmarks Conservancy, "Repairing Old and Historic Windows: A Manual for Architects and Homeowners."
 Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1992.
- Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits: http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/fax/tax_t.htm