

Simulated divided light windows, which have grilles permanently applied to the exterior of the glass, offer a good substitute for historic wood muntins. Avoid flat grilles placed between windowpanes or only on the interior, because they poorly replicate the aesthetic qualities of a historic window.

Summary

One of the basic tenets of preservation is to repair something first, when possible, rather than replace. After all, the old windows you may consider for replacement have been protecting your house for up to a century. Most replacement windows, particularly vinyl products, are only guaranteed for a few years. Preservation experts joke that there is a good reason they call them “replacement windows” — you have to replace them over and over again, unlike some historic windows that have lasted 100 years with regular maintenance.



It could take 20 or 30 years to get back in energy savings what you spend on window replacements. Most people just don't stay in a home long enough to recoup the money they spent.

Beth Parks, Associate Professor of Physics at Colgate University



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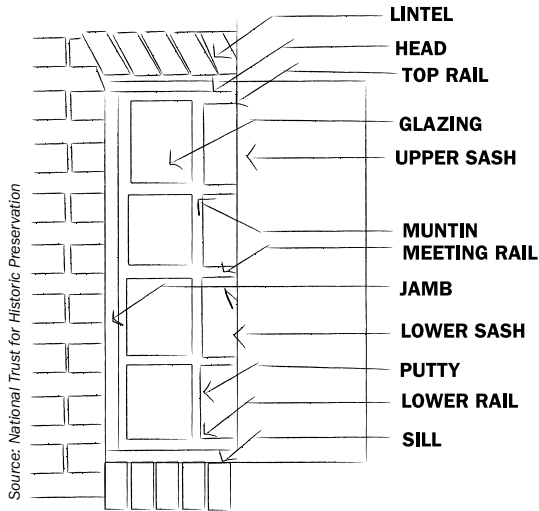
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Historic Windows

How Repair Can Save Money,
Preserve Character and Improve
Energy Efficiency





Source: National Trust for Historic Preservation

Why historic windows matter

Windows are significant character-defining elements of historic buildings. Their design, craftsmanship and aesthetic qualities often make them worthy of preservation. People often do not realize that windows do more than let in light and air. The wrong window can stand out like a black eye on an historic home. This is especially true when one type of window is replaced with another type, such as replacing a double-hung for instance with a casement or sliding window.

Some people decide to replace windows in pursuit of better energy efficiency, convenience and lower maintenance. Most local residents have received a telephone call or mailer urging them to consider replacement windows to make an old home more energy efficient with less maintenance. These promotions imply that swapping old wood or metal windows with vinyl or aluminum replacements will automatically save you money in lower energy costs.

But like all components of historic buildings, windows need regular maintenance to extend their useful life. Even if windows are

deteriorated, it can often be cheaper to reglaze, caulk, weather-strip or scrape and paint the old windows, which are made of old-growth wood, a denser, longer-lasting material than wood harvested today. The addition of a storm window can protect a home's historic windows and extend their life for decades. Properly maintained historic wood windows with weather-stripping and storm windows can improve their energy efficiency and are comparable to the energy efficiency of many new windows.

Of course, some window components may be so rotted or otherwise deteriorated that replacement is necessary. In that case, building owners are urged to replace windows or window parts as needed with windows that match the style, size and materials of the originals.

Under local ordinance, owners of buildings within Oak Park's historic districts, or of buildings designated as Historic Landmarks throughout the Village, are required to get permits before replacing windows. The Oak



Windows only account for up to 10 percent of a building's energy costs. Insulating your roof will save 80 percent of all energy savings possible. Caulking the exterior of the window frames will block airflows. Reglazing, painting and weather-stripping saves more energy than new double-glazed windows.

Vince Michael, Director of the Historic Preservation Program, School of the Art Institute of Chicago



A master plan should be created for the phased repair or replacement of windows in apartment buildings and condominiums. Such a master plan should identify

existing and proposed conditions, and provide design standards for systematic future repair or replacement work. Avoid the haphazard replacement of windows in separate living units.

Oak Park Architectural Review Guidelines

Source: National Trust for Historic Preservation

Park Historic Preservation Commission offers free advice and helpful literature that can guide you to the best choices for your historic home.

A preservation-friendly approach: Retain, repair, replace.

Try to repair what you have. Investigate the historic windows to determine the problems and their causes. Only after weighing the aesthetic, performance, energy efficiency, cost and long-term durability aspects of proposed work can an informed decision be made whether to repair or replace windows.

If you cannot feasibly repair it, replace it with the same thing. Consider the impact of the new windows on the appearance of the building. Replacement windows should match the historic windows in their materials, operation and design.

If you cannot replace it with the same thing, replace it with something that is similar in appearance. Wood windows are offered with aluminum or vinyl cladding on the exterior, which helps reduce the maintenance.