



# City of Easton, Pennsylvania HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

## GUIDELINES FOR WINDOWS AND DOORS

This brochure, published by the City of Easton Historic District Commission, contains guidelines for repair, replacement, or installation of windows and doors within the Historic District. Please review this information before planning your project. Familiarity with HDC standards can help move a project quickly through the approval process, saving applicants both time and money.

Historically, windows defined a building's architectural style and comprised approximately one quarter of an exterior wall's surface area. Similar to windows, doors help to define a building's style or use. A commercial door varies from a residential door, and stylistically a door



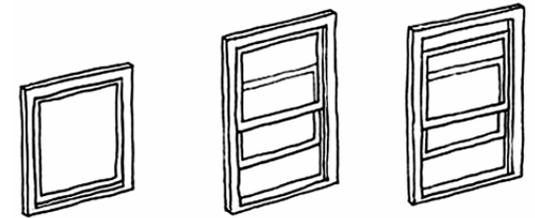
for a modest worker's house is very different from an elaborate Queen Anne door.

The HDC encourages a program of regular maintenance, repair and repainting. If a replacement is necessary, it should match the historic size, shape, operation, glazing, muntins, profile and detailing to the greatest extent possible.

### WINDOWS

There are nine common window types, all of which can have different configurations.

- **Fixed:** Non-operable framed glazing
- **Single-hung:** Fixed upper sash above a vertically rising lower sash
- **Double-hung:** Two sashes that can be raised and lowered vertically

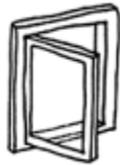


*Fixed*

*Single hung*

*Double hung*

- **Casement:** Hinged on one side and swinging in or out
- **Hopper:** Hinged at the bottom and projecting in at an angle
- **Vertical pivot:** Pivots vertically along a central axis



Casement

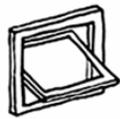


Hopper

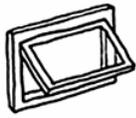


Vertical pivot

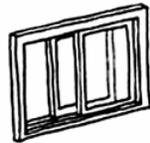
- **Horizontal pivot:** Pivots horizontally along a central axis
- **Awning:** Hinged at the top and projecting out at an angle
- **Sliding:** Either a fixed panel with a horizontally sliding sash or overlapping horizontally sliding sash



Horizontal pivot

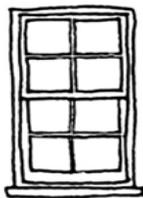


Awning

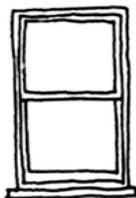


Sliding

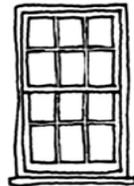
The muntin pattern, i.e., the number and configuration of panes or lights, further defines the window style. For example, a 4/4 double hung window indicates there are 4 panes in each of the sashes.



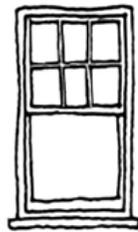
4/4 Window



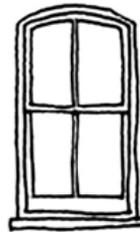
1/1 Window



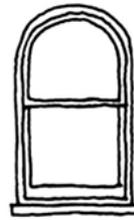
6/6 Window



6/1 Window  
w/ arched head



2/2 Window  
w/ round head



6/6 Window

### Guidelines

Different window configurations are appropriate for different architectural styles and periods. Decreasing, increasing, or altering window size or shape to allow for installation of stock window sizes or picture windows will not be recommended for approval. New window openings at publicly visible elevations, installing tinted or colored glazing, and installing replacement windows without external muntin grids is prohibited.

Generally, a window that has not received regular maintenance can appear to be in considerably worse condition than it actually is. Replacing the entire window because of a deteriorated sill or bottom rail is not necessary. In many cases, replacing or repairing the damaged component, along with an ongoing maintenance program may be all that is required.

Typical problems with older windows include reducing air infiltration, window operation, and appearance. Before replacing a window, consider

- Installing weather-stripping between all moving parts
- Replacing broken glass and/or missing putty
- Caulking exterior joints
- Adding interior or exterior storm sash (see below)
- Repairing sash cords and weights as required
- Regularly maintaining the window, including repainting as needed.

Where replacement of existing windows is necessary, historically appropriate window configurations should be used. In addition, using true divided light windows is encouraged. Windows with snap-in muntin grids or internal muntins between glazing layers should be avoided.

All replacement windows are not created equal. Whereas wood windows were historically produced from durable, high quality hardwoods, many of today's replacement windows are made from new growth timber, which is softer and more

prone to deterioration. Windows made with vinyl and PVC materials are subject to breakdown from ultraviolet light, shortening their life expectancy and are therefore prohibited.

The HDC encourages installing quality wood windows if replacement of historic windows is necessary. Typically, reputable lumberyards provide a better selection of quality wood replacement windows than the large home improvement stores.



### **STORM WINDOWS**

Ideally, a storm sash should conceal as little of the historic window as possible. One alternative is to install interior storm windows, which minimize any changes to the exterior appearance.

If exterior storm windows are selected, they should

- match the shape of the window opening
- align divisions with the divisions of the window
- utilize glass rather than Plexiglas or other acrylic material
- minimize damage to the historic window and frames during installation.

Wood storm sashes are preferred as they lose less heat through the frame than aluminum. They can be custom made to fit any size or shaped opening. Regardless of material, storm window frames should be painted to match or complement the window frame. Storm sashes should be removable to allow regular maintenance of the window.

### **SHUTTERS**

Exterior shutters were used historically on some, but not all, buildings. There were two types of shutters used: paneled and louvered. Paneled shutters were used on the ground floor windows for protection, while louvered shutters were used on the upper floors to control light and ventilation. Not all windows on a building utilized shutters.



*Repairing and repainting the deteriorated shutters will extend their life span, postponing costly replacement.*

The HDC encourages the retention and maintenance of shutters where they existed historically. The style, size, and shape of the shutter should be appropriate to the style of the house and the location of the window. Shutters should be sized and fitted to cover the window when closed. Utilizing refurbished historic shutter hardware is encouraged.

The HDC discourages installing shutters where they did not exist historically. In

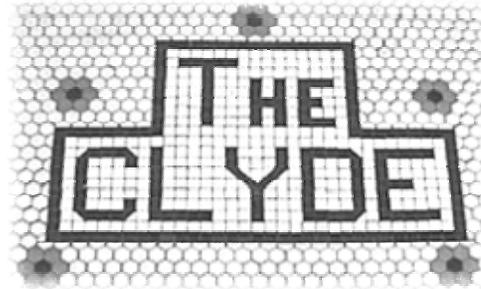
addition, screwing shutters to the face of the building or installing vinyl or aluminum shutters will not be recommended for approval.



## DOORS

Although some of the entrance doors in the Historic District are flush with the building facade, many are recessed, i.e. in an alcove used to accentuate the entry to a building or store. Doors and entrances are considered to be irreplaceable parts of a building's historic character. The features of the door and entrance, including pilasters, columns and entablatures, should be preserved. The

HDC recommends repairing rather than replacing elements of the entrance and door.



*In the past, many businesses presented their name in tiles in the entryway of their building. Retention is strongly encouraged.*

If alteration or replacement is necessary, replacement doors should match the building's original opening and entrance configuration. If the entrance to a building is recessed, it should remain so. Doors that are flush with the sidewalk should be avoided. Also, using stock residential doors on a commercial structure will not be approved.

When replacing original doors, if there is sufficient physical or pictorial evidence to support their recreation, the HDC recommends a replacement which matches the original in terms of design and materials. If the original doors no longer exist, new doors should be compatible with

the style and size of the buildings. Enlarging or reducing the opening size to accommodate a new door is not recommended.

The HDC will not recommend for approval plain modern flush doors, modern flush doors with historically inappropriate window configurations, or the enclosure of existing transom windows or sidelights.

### **STORM DOORS**

The HDC will allow a certain degree of flexibility in the materials used for storm doors as long as the contemporary material conveys the same visual appearance of the traditional material. Storm doors with leaded glass inserts are not appropriate in the Historic District. Also, storm doors that obscure the historical features of a door will not be recommended.

### **STOREFRONTS**

The most character-defining feature of a commercial building is often the storefronts. Alterations or renovations should preserve the historic storefront to the greatest possible extent, minimizing alterations or the removal of historic materials such as distinctive flooring. Modifications that are sensitive to the

historic character of the building are encouraged. Signage or awnings should be sympathetic to the style of the building, minimize damage to historic features, and be installed in locations that complement a building's architectural features.

The HDC will not recommend for approval the removal of historic storefront materials such as wood, cast iron, and terra cotta. Reducing the original storefront window opening sizes or installing tinted or colored window glazing will also not be recommended for approval.



## WHO CAN HELP ME?

If you are considering repairing, replacing or installing windows or doors in a building in the historic district, contact the HDC to review your project in its earliest stages. The HDC has reserved 15 to 20

minutes at the end of its monthly meetings to provide consultation and advice to members of the public. Contact the Bureau of Codes and Inspections at (610) 250-6724 to confirm the date of the next HDC meeting and schedule a consultation.

### **Additional Sources of Information**

Contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation or visit online at [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org).

Contact the US Government Bookstore or visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) for *Preservation Briefs*, National Park Service.

### **Further reading:**

*Historic Building Façades: The Manual for Maintenance and Rehabilitation*, William C. Foulks (ed.) (Washington, DC, Preservation Press, 1997)

*Caring for Your Historic House*, National Park Service/Heritage Preservation Services (New York, Harry Abrams, Inc., 1998)

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating,*

*Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Building*, Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer (National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 1995)

*Preservation Sourcebook, Mid-Atlantic Edition, 1998: The Comprehensive Directory of Products and Services for Historic Preservation and Restoration* (Vienna, VA, Preservation Publications LLC, 1997)

## Acknowledgments

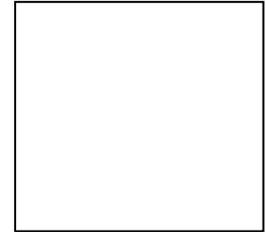
This publication was prepared for the City of Easton and the Downtown Local Historic District Community Task Force with help and guidance from the following:

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Building*. Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 1995.

*Easton Design Guide*  
South Bethlehem Historic Conservation Commission *Design Guidelines*  
David Shafferman, AIA, Bonsall Shafferman Architects

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