MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 4, 2023

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall, and also via Zoom on Saturday, March 4, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Suzette Astley, Mike Guerber, Duane Eash, Sherry Brayton, Donnie Moore, Matt Ruff, Wade Squiers and Guy Booth. Attending via Zoom was Janet Budack. A guest at the meeting was Cliff Weaver on behalf of the owners of the building at 100 1st St SE, Mount Vernon.

Minutes of the meeting of February 4, 2023 were amended and approved as amended.

Cliff Weaver was present at the meeting today to give a pre-review regarding the work that is being done on the building at 100 1st St SE. This building is in the commercial historic district and has been known as the Sing-Along building. Wade Squiers is the architect who is assisting in the design of repairs and modifications that need to be completed. The roof repair has now been completed. There was substantial weakness because of wood that had deteriorated. The two accessory buildings at the south end of the property have been demolished and removed. Cliff Weaver talked about the changes that are being made to the exterior. This includes moving an access door that is on the west side of the building to the east side of the building. This will return that portion of the building to its original configuration, except there will now be windows where there was no entrance previously. The access to the second story of the building will be in the new doorway on the east side of the building. Cliff provided a copy of the type of door and described the configuration for the landing and canopy above the door. There is also a door on the south end of the building that will be replaced. This is not a door for ingress and egress to the main building, but only to the HVAC equipment.

The owners of the building are being diligent in the long-term restoration. They have hired a company that will advise them on the possibility of removal of paint on the building and returning the building to its original brick and limestone exterior. The windows that are being replaced will match the original windows in the front of the building. Also, new hardwood floors are being installed where flooring needs to be replaced. Because of the substantial amount of work that is being done, the Commission suggested that the owners investigate what, if any tax credits may be available for this renovation project. Mr. Weaver will submit the application for a certificate of appropriateness at our next meeting. The Commission is impressed with the work that is being done by the new owners.

Sue will give the Commission's annual report to the City Council at the council meeting on March 6, 2023. The full report is attached to the Minutes.

Sue led a discussion regarding how the Commission should deal with requests for installing vinyl products on buildings that are within our jurisdiction. The Secretary of Interior standards do not endorse the use of vinyl. The Commission is presented requests for use of vinyl products for windows, doors, siding and other architectural features. Our responsibility is to comply with the Secretary of Interior standards for treatment of historic properties. The Commission wants to establish the criteria for times where there can be exceptions that would allow the use of vinyl products. We will prepare a summary of reasons that vinyl may be used in place of traditional historic materials.

Sue also talked about methods of streamlining the process for people who have non-controversial needs to get a certificate from HPC. An example would be a request for re-roofing a house. Because this would be non-controversial, the Commission will establish a guideline where the chair can sign a certificate of no material effect. However, this will be presented at the next public meeting of the Commission so its approval will be of record.

The Commission discussed the compilation of a list of contractors who have worked on historic structures. This list of contractors and craftspeople should be available so when an owner needs work done, they will have a list of people who have had experience. Suzette has put together a document that lists contractors and craftspeople that will appear on our website. The list is not an endorsement and does not give any guarantee of the quality of work on any particular project. However, this does give a building owner a list of contractors who may be of assistance.

Suzette indicated that she has been considering preparing an application for an HRDP grant. This would be for projects that can be done in the historic districts of the City, and possibly with assistance from the city employees. This grant requires an in-kind match from the recipient. An example would be cleaning the exterior of the Visitor's Center. At this time, the City personnel would not have time to take on additional projects, but the Commission could organize a volunteer group to perform the work which could then qualify for a matching grant from HRDP. The Commission has decided to have a sub-committee that deals with windows and other requests for non-historic material. Duane and Wade have agreed to be part of that committee. The committee on the cemetery project had no report for this meeting.

A workshop on historic gardens is scheduled for April 15. There will also be a workshop on painting on May 20 that Duane will be presenting. Both workshops will be at the Buresh Center.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary

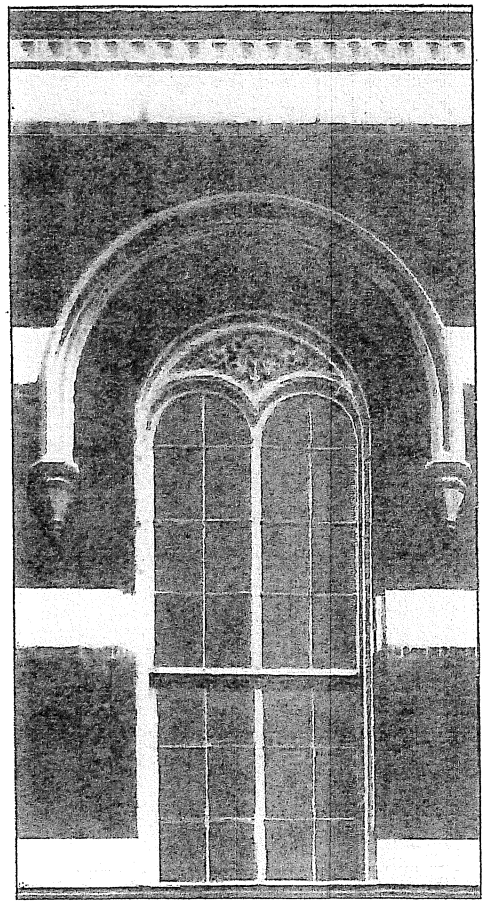
Building Exterior

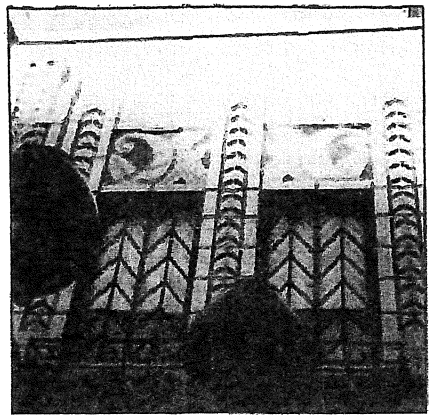
Windows

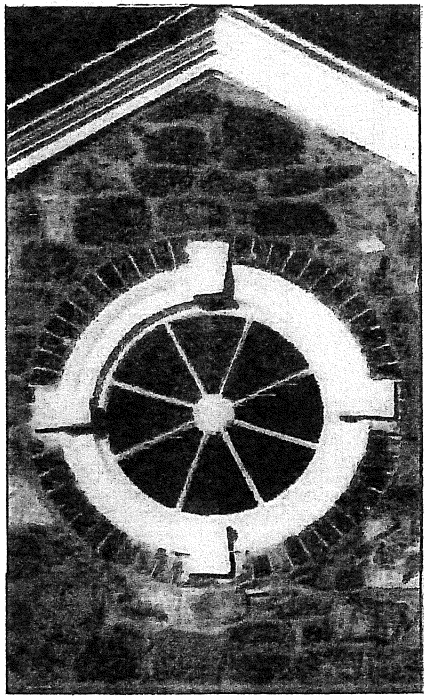
Technology and prevailing architectural styles have shaped the history of windows in the United States starting in the 17th century with wooden casement windows with tiny glass panes seated in lead cames. From the transitional single-hung sash in the early 1700s to the true double-hung sash later in the same century, these early wooden windows were characterized by the small panes, wide muntins, and the way in which decorative trim was used on both the exterior and interior of the window. As the sash thickness increased by the turn of the century, muntins took on a thinner appearance as they narrowed in width but increased in thickness according to the size of the window and design practices. Regional traditions continued to have an impact on the prevailing window design such as with the long-term use of "french windows" in areas of the deep South.

Changes in technology led to the possibility of larger glass panes so that by the mid-19th century, two-over-two lights were common; the manufacturing of plate glass in the United States allowed for dramatic use of large sheets of glass in commercial and office buildings by the late 19th century. With mass-produced windows, mail order distribution, and changing architectural styles, it was possible to obtain a wide range of window designs and light patterns in sash. Popular versions of Arts and Crafts houses constructed in the early 20th century frequently utilized smaller lights in the upper sash set in groups or pairs and saw the re-emergence of casement windows. In the early 20th century, the desire for fireproof building construction in dense urban areas contributed to the growth of a thriving steel window industry along with a market for hollow metal and metal clad wooden windows.

As one of the few parts of a building serving as both an interior and exterior feature, windows are nearly always an important part of the historic character of a building. In most buildings, windows also comprise a considerable amount of the historic fabric of the wall plane and thus are deserving of special consideration in a rehabilitation project.

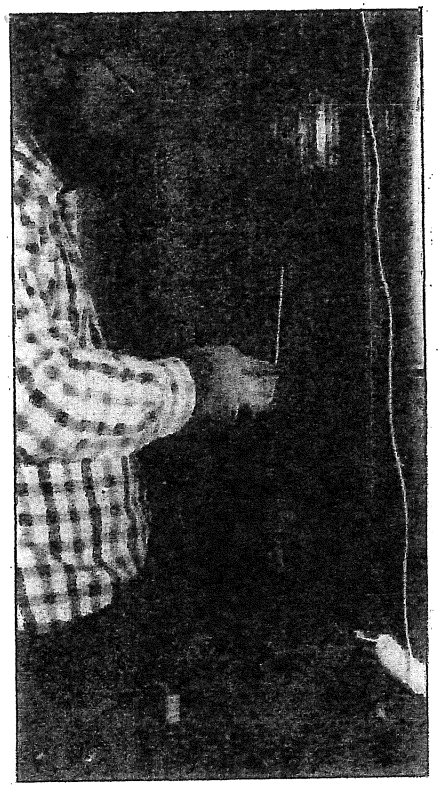






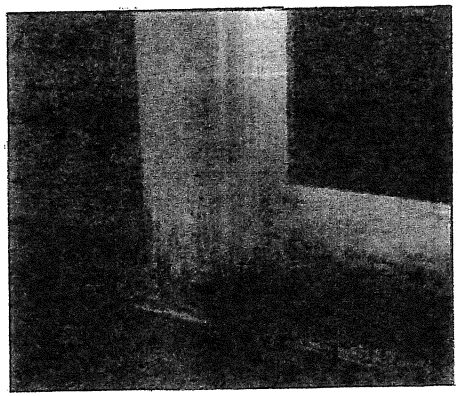
The distinctive shape and decorative detailing of a building's windows often help establish its architectural style and character.

Recommended	Not Recommended
Identify, retain, and preserve	
Identifying, retaining, and preserving windows—and their functional and decorative features—that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. Such features can include frames, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, heads, hoodmolds, panelled or decorated jambs and moldings, and interior and exterior shutters and blinds.	Removing or radically changing windows which are important in defining the historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.
	Changing the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows, through cutting new openings, blocking-in windows, and installing replacement sash that do not fit the historic window opening.
	Changing the historic appearance of windows through the use of inappropriate designs, materials, finishes, or colors which noticeably change the sash, depth of reveal, and muntin configuration; the reflectivity and color of the glazing; or the appearance of the frame.
	Obscuring historic window trim with metal or other material.
	Stripping windows of historic material such as wood, cast iron, and bronze.
Conducting an in-depth survey of the conditions of existing windows early in rehabilitation planning so that repair and upgrading methods and possible replacement options can be fully explored.	Replacing windows solely because of peeling paint, broken glass, stuck sash, and high air infiltration. These conditions, in themselves, are no indication that windows are beyond repair.
Protect and maintain	
Protecting and maintaining the wood and architectural metal which comprise the window frame, sash, muntins, and surrounds through appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and re-application of protective coating systems.	Failing to provide adequate protection of materials on a cyclical basis so that deterioration of the windows results.

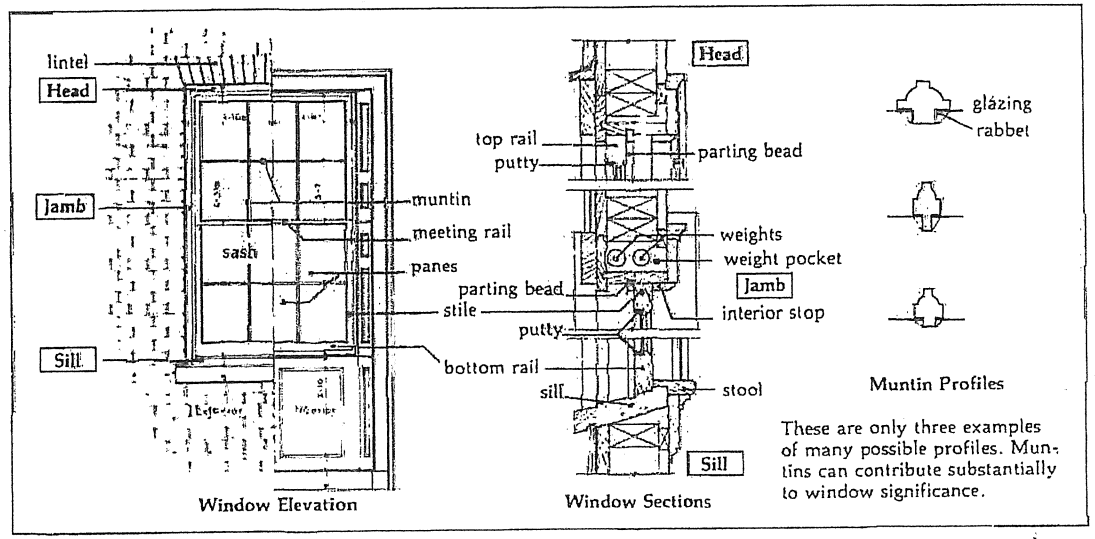


Maintaining a historic window may include work as basic as replacing a sash cord.

Recommended	Not Recommended
Making windows weather tight by re-caulking and replacing or installing weatherstripping. These actions also improve thermal efficiency.	Retrofitting or replacing windows rather than maintaining the sash, frame, and glazing.
Evaluating the overall condition of materials to determine whether more than protection and maintenance are required, i.e. if repairs to windows and window features will be required.	Failing to undertake adequate measures to assure the protection of historic windows.
Repair	
Repairing window frames and sash by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing. Such repair may also include replacement in kind of those parts that are either extensively deteriorated or are missing when there are surviving prototypes such as architraves, hoodmolds, sash, sills, and interior or exterior shutters and blinds.	Replacing an entire window when repair of materials and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts are appropriate. Failing to reuse serviceable window hardware such as brass sash lifts and sash locks. Using substitute material for the replacement part that does not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts of the window or that is physically or chemically incompatible.



Deterioration of poorly maintained windows usually begins on horizontal surfaces where water collects. Problem areas on this sill are clearly indicated by paint failure due to moisture.

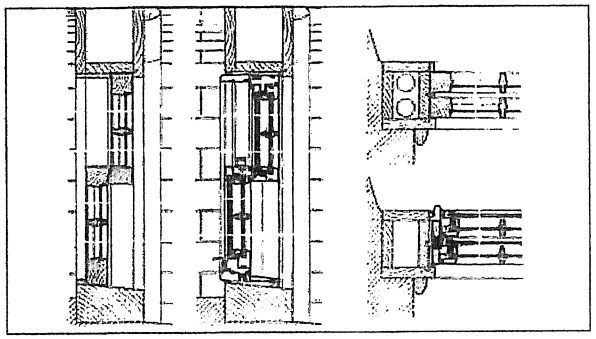


These drawings identify individual parts and fabrication details of a historic wooden double-hung window.

Recommended

Replace

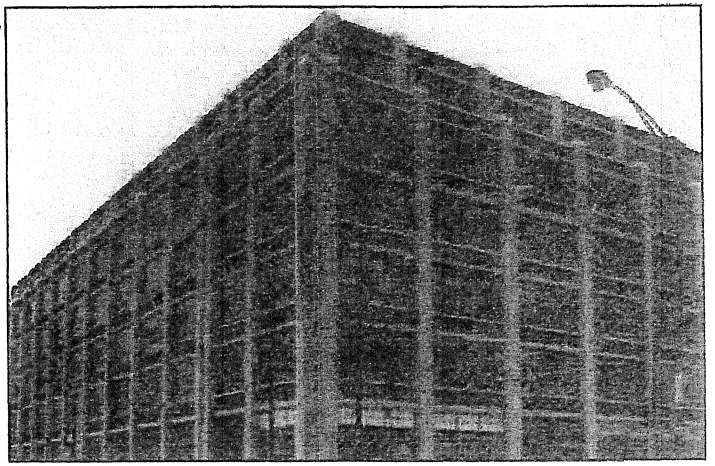
Replacing in kind an entire window that is too deteriorated to repair using the same sash and pane configuration and other design details. If using the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible when replacing windows deteriorated beyond repair, then a compatible substitute material may be considered. For example, on certain types of large buildings, particularly high-rises, aluminum windows may be a suitable replacement for historic wooden sash provided wooden replacement are not practical and the design detail of the historic windows can be matched. Historic color duplication, custom contour panning, incorporation of either an integral muntin or 5/8" deep trapezoidal exterior muntin grids, where applicable, retention of the same glass to frame ratio, matching of the historic reveal, and duplication of the frame width, depth, and such existing decorative details as arched tops should all be components in aluminum replacements for use on historic buildings.

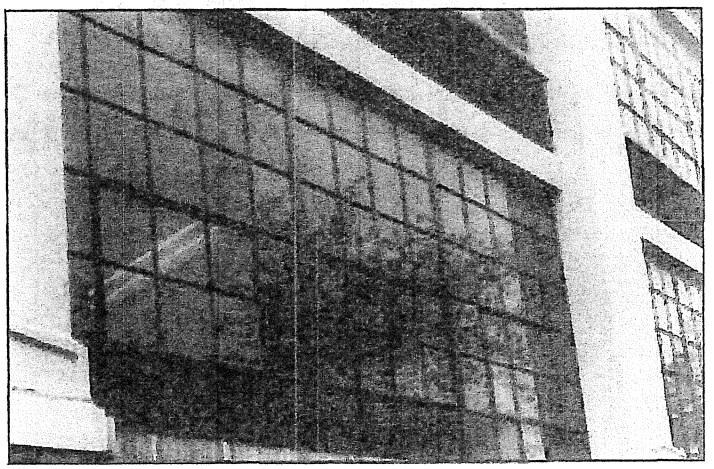


For some larger buildings, it may be appropriate to replace seriously deteriorated windows with new ones that replicate most of the historic visual qualities.This two-part drawing shows the original windows in a mill and the rehabilitation solution that retained the wood frames, then utilized an aluminum sash with true divided lights and a piggyback interior storm panel.

Not Recommended

Removing a character-defining window that is unrepairable and blocking it in; or replacing it with a new window that does not convey the same visual appearance.

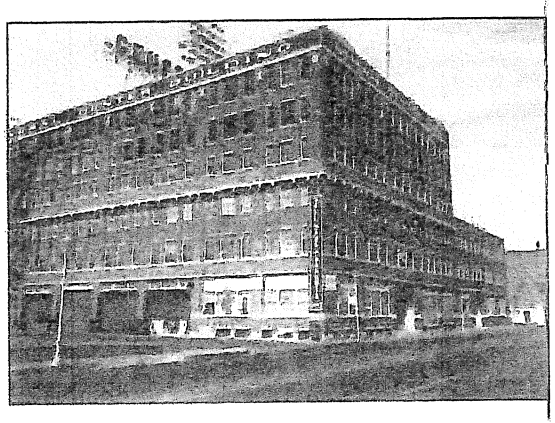


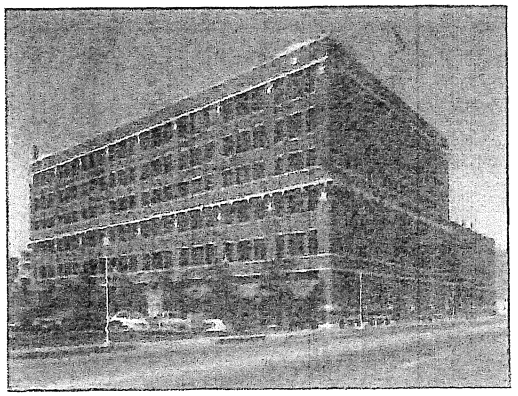


The steel pivot windows in this historic manufacturing building were replaced with new windows which matched the multi-lighted originals.

The following work is highlighted to indicate that it represents the particularly complex technical or design aspects of rehabilitation projects and should only be considered after the preservation concerns listed above have been addressed.

Recommended	Not Recommended
Design for Missing Historic Features	
Designing and installing new windows when the historic windows (frames, sash and glazing) are completely missing. The replacement windows may be an accurate restoration using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the window openings and the historic character of the building.	Creating a false historical appearance because the replaced window is based on insufficient historical, pictorial, and physical documentation. Introducing a new design that is incompatible with the historic character of the building.
Alterations/Additions for the New Use	
Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character-defining elevations if required by the new use. New window openings may also be cut into exposed party walls. Such design should be compatible with the overall design of the building, but not duplicate the fenestration pattern and detailing of a character-defining elevation.	Installing new windows, including frames, sash, and muntin configuration that are incompatible with the building's historic appearance or obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features.
Providing a setback in the design of dropped ceilings when they are required for the new use to allow for the full height of the window openings.	Inserting new floors or furred-down ceilings which cut across the glazed areas of windows so that the exterior form and appearance of the windows are changed.





When the six-over-six windows were replaced with inappropriate single sheets of tinted glass, the historic industrial character of this building was lost.