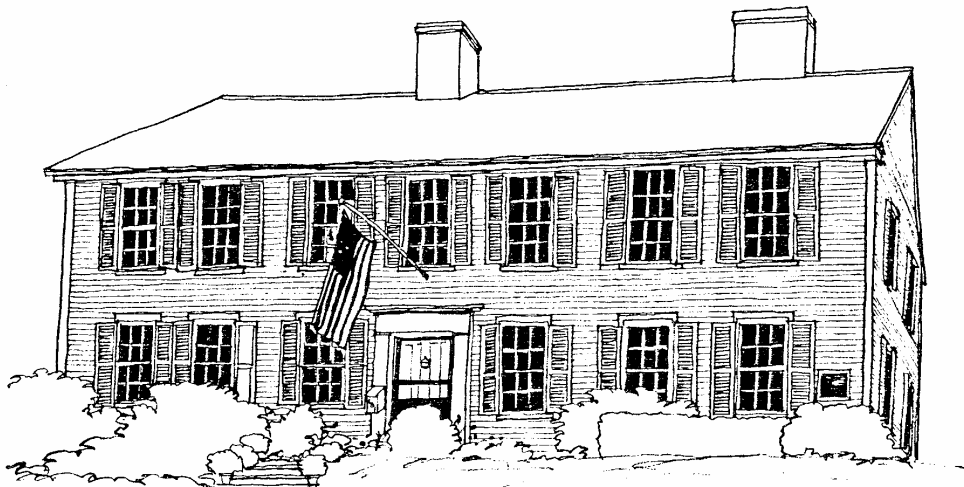


Guidelines for Work in Historic Districts

As the starting point for its guidelines, the Commission has adopted criteria for appropriateness that follow the Federal guidelines for rehabilitation of old buildings. Taken together, they promote the goal of historic preservation **while leaving ample scope to accommodate the realities of modern life**, the diversity of styles found in Hingham and the differing preferences of property owners. The following expectations are set forth in the Federal guidelines:

- Preserve the architectural character of a property. Try to retain original materials and features.
- Repair rather than replace deteriorated features whenever possible. Avoid guesswork; make accurate, well documented repairs. If new materials are used, they should match the old.
- Make changes that are unobtrusive and in keeping with their context. Major alterations should relate to the original structure in character, form and scale.
- Respect previous changes to a property if they offer significant evidence of its history.
- Recognize that a building is a product of its own time. Avoid alterations that exaggerate its age.
- Retain examples of skilled craftsmanship and other features that predate mass production. Particular styles often reflect manufacturing techniques of their time.
- Make alterations in a way that does not impair the integrity of the original structure.



GEN. BENJ. LINCOLN HOUSE (17th Century, 1667) 181 North Street

The guidelines set out below allow the Commission to apply these and other criteria for appropriateness in a meaningful and consistent manner, but with due regard for individual circumstances. The distinctive characteristics of different buildings, as well as the particular preference of their owners, make it difficult to establish rules. Along with the standards and guidelines formulated by the commission, owners may wish to consult Article V of the Historic Districts By-Law (“Factors Considered by Commission in Making Determination on Application for Certificate”).

The following is meant to be instructive, but it may be subject to modifications or additions from time to time. Features that are not listed may still be subject to review; they have been omitted only because they are uncommon in Hingham. In addition, it may be assumed unless stated otherwise that all items on this list involve a certificate from the Historic Districts Commission for work performed in an historic district, even though no distinction is made here between the type of certificate involved.

- **Additions** should be compatible with the existing building and neighborhood both in overall character and in specific elements. They should not damage or alter the character-defining features of the existing building, which should be preserved. The key factors to be considered include the **scale** and proportions of the addition; the **shape and style**; the **siting**, and **building elements** such as windows, doors, trim, porches or decks, materials and finish. Generally speaking, all elements of a new addition will be reviewed in light of the guidelines for those elements.
- **Air conditioning** units that are removable may be installed without an application to the Historic Districts Commission. Permanent fixtures must be reviewed to ensure that they do not damage or obscure important architectural features.
- **Antennas** for television or radio are generally allowable, subject to regulations affecting their height and form. Antennas may be removed or replaced by cable without application to the commission. Satellite dishes require a review and should be sited as unobtrusively as possible.
- **Architectural elements** include a range of features, from major building components such as doors, windows, porches and balconies to decorative details such as cornices, columns, pediments and railings. Large or small, they play a key role in defining the style of a building and so deserve particular attention and respect in efforts toward historic preservation.

Original elements should be retained to the extent possible. Other alterations should be carried out in a way that does not damage or hide these elements. If an architectural element is missing altogether, several options exist. It may be possible to document the

missing piece through pictorial evidence such as a photograph or the physical evidence of an outline on the building surface. Careful study of other buildings from the same period can supplement these clues. Then, an accurate replacement can be obtained and correctly positioned on the building.

Architectural salvage yards can be a good source of old features. The *Old House Journal* catalog is an excellent resource for period features. Alternately, millwork contractors can create precise reproductions at a tolerable cost. Stock patterns may be approved if they accurately reproduce the original elements in proportion and style, and if they are appropriate to the period of the building. Even when stock elements are well made, however, the range of styles may be limited.

What should be **avoided** in repairs and restorations alike is the use of architectural elements that falsify or confuse the history of a building. Features are meaningless when they are used in buildings from an earlier or a later time; since architectural elements are closely linked to particular styles and often reflect the manufacturing techniques of the periods.

- **Artificial or imitation materials** are discouraged and will normally not be approved.
- **Asphalt shingles** may be repaired, replaced or substituted for wood shingles, and should be predominately black, dark gray or weathered dark wood tone. Any existing color may be proposed, although it may not be approved. New colors may also be considered.
- **Awnings** will be considered if they are made of canvas. Metal or vinyl awnings will not be approved.
- **Basketball hoops** may be installed without an application to the Historic Districts Commission.
- **Brickwork** should be sand or water-struck to match existing work, of the same size and laid in the same pattern. New mortar should not be darkened artificially but should be allowed to weather over time. Pointing mortar should match the original in color, style, strength and consistency. Strength is a particularly important factor because the brick itself can be damaged if the mortar used involves too high a concentration of portland cement. Mortar was historically formulated to be softer than brick, therefore, mortar joints will need to be repointed every 50 years or so. Mortar within a wall indicates original color more accurately than surface mortar, which becomes soiled and tends to darken with age.
- **Chimneys** often require repair and can be hazardous if overlooked. Repairs may be undertaken subject to the guideline on brickwork above. Proposals to alter, remove or replace a chimney will be reviewed in light of the guidelines for architectural

elements as well as for brickwork. Key considerations include height, material, form and location.

- **Cleaning** of buildings does not require any certificate from the commission. However, it is recommended that cleaning techniques be as gentle as possible. A mild soap and water solution is probably the best choice for painted surfaces. Liquid bleach diluted in water can be used first to remove mildew.

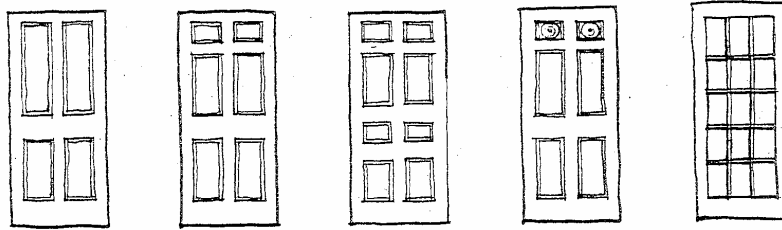
Sandblasting and water blasting can be extremely dangerous to old surfaces and masonry and should be avoided. Blasting with other materials may be considered. Chemical cleaning agents should be spot-tested in an inconspicuous place for staining and other ill effects.

- **Decks, patios and terraces** should be compatible with a building and its site in design, proportion and materials. In reviewing plans, the commission will examine features such as fencing and lighting along with the overall design.
- **Demolitions or partial demolitions** within historic districts **must be reviewed** by the commission, which will consider proposals in light of the criteria for appropriateness and any relevant guidelines. The commission's authority covers outbuildings as well as the principal structure on a property. Demolitions should be contemplated with great caution, since they irreversibly alter an historic building; less drastic alternatives may be available. On the other hand, demolishing an addition that is neither original nor appropriate may well be a positive step.

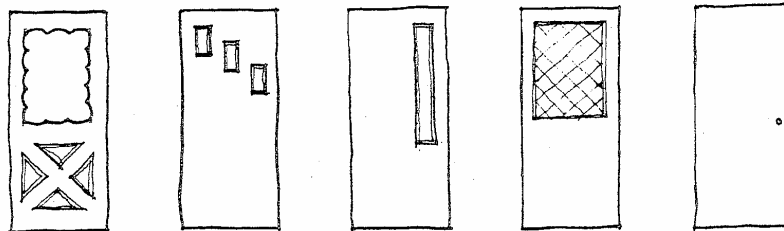
Outside historic districts, demolitions are subject to the Demolition Delay By-Law. To determine if your property is subject to the Demolition Delay By-Law, please contact the Historical Commissions Administrator or look for the property address in the [Comprehensive Community Inventory](#) of historic assets on the Town of Hingham Historical Commissions website.

- **Display of date** is encouraged when the date and historic name of a building can be documented. Property owners who wish to obtain an approved sign should apply to the *Hingham Historical Society, 34 Main Street; Hingham, Massachusetts 02043*. Sign applications are available from the Historical Society or from the Historical Commissions office. All applications must be signed by the Historical Commissions Administrator, who will verify the historic name and date.
- **Doors and Doorways** may be installed, replaced, altered, relocated or removed subject to approval by the commission, which will review the proposed work more or less thoroughly depending on the significance of the change. New entryways may become necessary during the evolution of a building. The door opening should be compatible with the existing building in location, proportions, design and decoration. The door itself should be appropriate to the character and period of the house in design and details, especially the arrangement of panels and glass. Old

doors can be repaired even if they are quite heavily ornamented, and it is not difficult to find new replacements that reproduce the old panel arrangements.



TRADITIONAL AND APPROPRIATE ENTRY DOORS



INAPPROPRIATE ENTRY DOORS

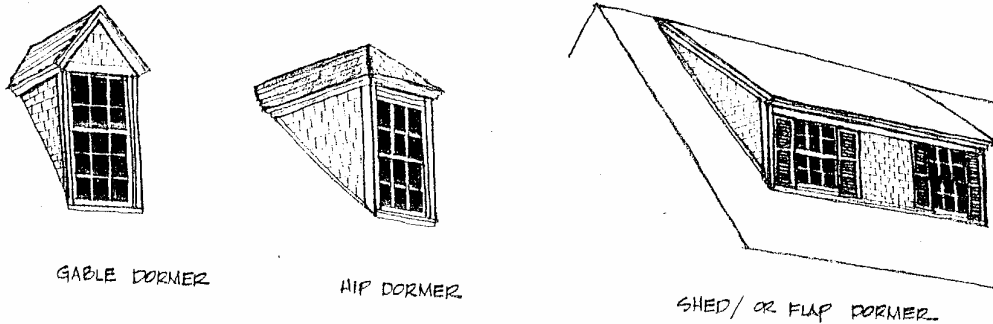
DOORS AND DOOR STYLES



Entryways

ENTRYWAYS

- **Dormers** may be installed, relocated or removed subject to the guidelines for architectural elements. Existing dormers should not be altered in scale or form, while new dormers should match existing ones.

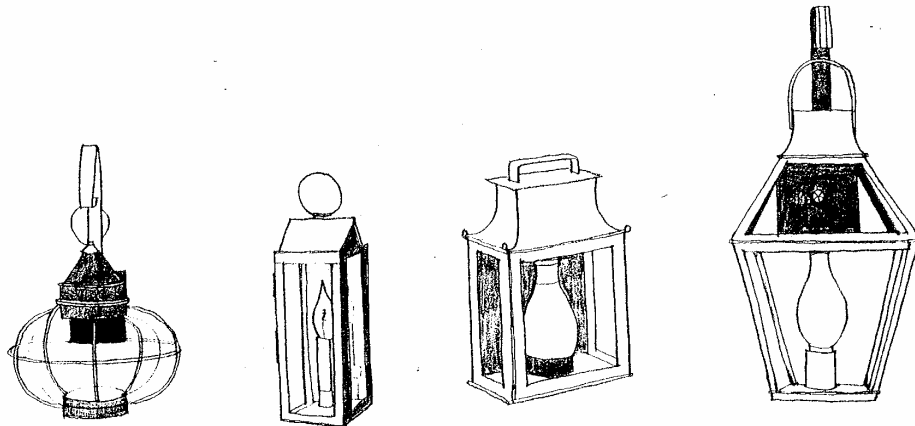


TYPES OF DORMERS

- **Driveways and parking areas** may be installed or relocated subject to a review of their relationship to the site, the existing buildings and the streetscape. Repairs may be undertaken using materials that match the existing ones. Bituminous concrete (blacktop) paving will be approved where appropriate.
- **Fencing and boundary walls** should be compatible with the property in material, proportion, style and color. They are an important aspect of the setting for a property and of the streetscape. Wood and wrought iron fences and stone walls are each appropriate for certain period structures. Bear in mind that fencing may be subject to height and setback requirements imposed by other town departments, independent of the review by the Historic Districts Commission. PVC or plastic fencing, trellises, arbors or gates will not be approved.
- **Flags and banners** may be displayed without an application to the commission provided that they are not used for commercial or advertising purposes. Commercial flags are subject to the guideline and other town regulations concerning signs.
- **Gutters** may be made of wood or painted aluminum, and the commission will allow installation of new aluminum gutters in place of wood. Although aluminum has the advantage of low maintenance and a permanent finish, they are not without drawbacks. They are vulnerable to denting and bending, and they may look awkward against the original trim of an old building. Wood gutters do require regular painting, oiling and sealing, but they will endure in good condition if they are properly maintained. It may be possible to correct problems with gutters without replacing them. If the switch is made from

wood to aluminum, particular care should be taken to avoid damaging or removing significant building details. Downspouts should be round, not corrugated and should be painted to match the material to which they are attached, whether the trim or the body of the structure.

- **Hardware** on a building exterior, such as locks, hinges and doorknobs, should be consistent with the period of the building. Many excellent reproductions of period hardware are available today. Owners may want to check the *Old House Journal* catalog, the *Renovator's Supply* catalog, and shops or stores that sell period hardware, many of which advertise in magazines featuring period homes.
- **Interior elements** do not require any certification from the commission unless an interior alteration has an impact on exterior features that are visible from a public way.
- **Landscaping** is generally exempt from review and certification by the commission, especially if it represents normal maintenance and does not alter the siting of an existing building. A major landscaping plan that has a significant impact on the overall appearance of the site will be subject to review, as will the landscape design for new construction. **Hardscape** features of a landscaping project are subject to review in any case, such as a patio, walkway or fence. On the other hand, if these features are proposed independently of a landscaping plan, the commission might still give some weight to protection of plantings of great age and beauty.
- **Light fixtures** subject to review by the Historic Districts Commission include those located on a building exterior, on a porch or deck, on pathways and paved areas and elsewhere around a property. They should be appropriate in design and scale to the character of a building and its setting. Fine adaptations of period fixtures are readily available. The intensity and distribution of light will also be taken into account, particularly as it affects neighboring properties.



SUITABLE LIGHT FIXTURES

- **Maintenance** including repair or replacement requires an application for a certificate of non-applicability to keep an accurate record of work done on a building exterior in an historic district. A project is subject to review by the commission only to the extent that it involves a change in design, materials, color or features covered by the Historic Districts By-Law and the guidelines. The By-Law does not impose any obligations on property owners with respect to maintenance.
- **Mailboxes and mail slots** may be installed without application to the commission. A receptacle that is in keeping with the period of a building can be especially attractive, but any style that is simple and unobtrusive can also be suitable.
- **Materials** used in repair and alteration of historic buildings may reproduce the existing materials, or another selection may be proposed. Because of changes that may have taken place over the years, the existing materials may not be appropriate to the age of the building, and something closer to the original may be a wiser choice.
- **Mechanical equipment** such as meters, HVAC units, and transformers, for example, should be located to minimize the visual impact on an historic structure, and may require commission review.
- **New construction** in historic districts is subject to review by the commission in accordance with the criteria for appropriateness and the guidelines. The new building must be compatible with the surrounding structures and with the streetscape. Among the factors to be taken into account are height, scale, orientation toward the street, site coverage, roof form, door and window openings, architectural details, materials, color and landscape.
- **Outbuildings** are subject to certification and review by the commission in the same way as the primary structure on a property if they are visible from a public place and fall within the boundaries of the map of an historic district. This category includes barns, garages, storage sheds, greenhouses, workshops, playhouses and gazebos. Newly constructed outbuildings should be compatible with the primary structure in scale and proportions, and they should be made of the same or complementary materials. New construction and alterations are covered by the relevant guidelines on roofing, siding, paint and so forth.
- **Paint and stain colors** are associated with particular architectural styles and periods, reflecting settlement patterns and development in specific geographical locations. The HDC uses and approves colors from the palette of historical colors developed by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). This palette is available on loan from the Historical Commissions office or for purchase from SPNEA's website.

Color is an important element of a building's style and so should reflect a balanced consideration of authenticity and personal taste. Property owners may retain an existing color, bearing in mind that it may be inappropriate to the period of the building; or they may select a new color from the approved roster. In some instances, the choice of a period color will need to be based on the most dominant style of the building rather than on its actual age. The commission is available on an informal basis to discuss period colors or to advise on possible color choices.

It is important to note that colors that are advertised as "historic" or "traditional" may have very little justification. Many so-called Colonial colors, for instance, are based on the Colonial Revival of the 1890's. The pale shades that were popular during the Revival were inspired by the aged, weathered tones of old Colonial buildings, not the much stronger original hues. Homeowners interested in recreating early colors can hire a paint conservator to test for the earliest paint application used on a structure.

Although stain may be used on new or previously stained wood, paint is the only option for previously painted surfaces, whether of wood or masonry. Either oil or latex paint may be applied over oil paint, but oil may not be used over latex. Whichever type is selected, bear in mind that a very substantial buildup may lead to paint failure. Old layers of paint may need to be removed by hand, because sandblasting leaves a rough surface and water-based techniques may penetrate old wood. Removing paint by any means can be damaging to masonry walls, but loose paint must be taken off before repainting. Unpainted elements should be left unpainted in the interests of historical accuracy.

Many excellent books are available on the topic of historic paint colors. One such guide can be obtained on loan from the Historical Commissions office: *Painting Historic Exteriors: Colors, Application and Regulation; a Resource Guide for Historic Commissions, Historical Societies, Historic House Museums, Historic District Commissions, and Preservation Planning Staff* by Susan E. Maycock and Sarah J. Zimmerman, published by the Cambridge Historic Commission in cooperation with the Bay State Historic League. The guide is also available for purchase from the Cambridge Historic Commission website.

- **Porches** can be the dominant feature of a building façade, and they should be consistent with the period and style of the building. Size, architectural style, detailing and decorations, and features such as columns and railings are important elements of a porch design. Proposals to add, alter, remove or enclose a porch require review. The installation of screens requires an initial review, but seasonal changes to screens do not.

Porches may require a good deal of maintenance because of their exposure to the weather, and it may be tempting to deal with problems by transforming or even removing the porch. Such an approach may be acceptable if the porch is a later and perhaps inappropriate addition. More specific, less dramatic solutions may well be available, and these are to be preferred when an original porch contributes significantly to the architectural character of a building.

- **Roofing** may be repaired or replaced using either existing materials, which may or may not be historically accurate, or new material that is consistent in color and style with the period of a building. If asphalt shingles are used, black, gray or weathered dark wood tone is recommended. White and light colors are not in character for buildings of the 19th century and earlier. For wood roof shingles, red cedar is recommended. White cedar is impractical as it has a very short life span. Whatever material is used, distinctive patterns ought to be retained or reproduced to the extent possible.

Unlike many other features of old buildings, the roof is an area where repairs may be less desirable than replacement work. Repairs should be regarded as temporary, and a new roof should be anticipated sooner or later.

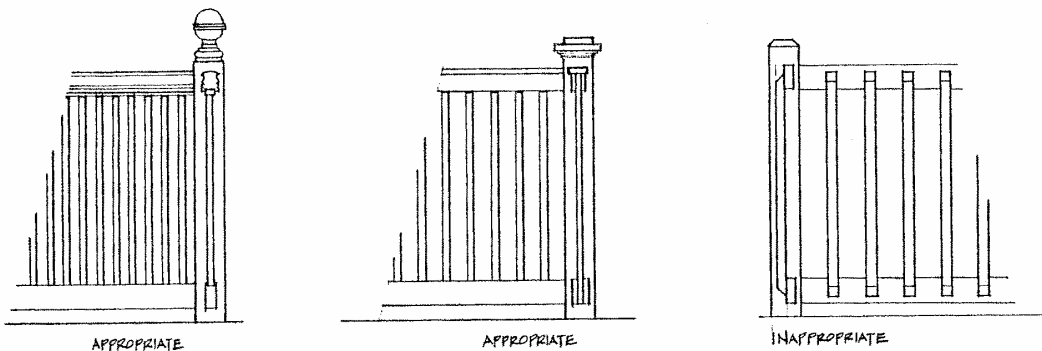
- **Shutters** (also called blinds) may be installed if they are consistent with the period of a building and correctly proportioned to the dimensions of the windows. They must be made of wood and should be working shutters, hung to drain when closed and on appropriate shutter hardware. They may not be nailed or screwed to the wall.
- **Siding** may be replaced or repaired in the existing material and design treatment. Siding on an addition should be the same as on the existing structure. Changes of material or design are subject to review, and aluminum or vinyl siding will not be approved.

Artificial siding literally covers up the distinctive surfaces and features of older buildings; it may hide and thus perpetuate rot and insect damage; it is neither maintenance-free nor easy to repair; it confers no special insulation value or fire protection; and it may cost a good deal more than some repairs and a fresh coat of paint. Wood siding is an integral part of old buildings and their architectural character. It is easy to maintain, less susceptible to the weather than vinyl (which can shatter in cold weather and fall off in the heat), and more resistant to dents than aluminum. If an old building has been resided in vinyl or aluminum, it may be well worthwhile to remove the synthetic siding and restore the original material underneath.

- **Signs** in historic districts must comply with the Zoning By-Law, and they are also subject to review by the Historic Districts Commission. (This requirement does not, however, extend to temporary, portable signs, such as those a contractor might display at the site of a job.) Size, scale, color and basic

design all help to determine whether a sign is well integrated with the architectural character and features of a building. A sign should harmonize with the design elements of a facade rather than disrupt or obscure them. Signs always require commission review.

- **Skylights** are subject to review by the commission. Flat glass skylights are preferred; curved plastic is not approved for roofs visible from a public place.
- **Solar collectors** and satellite dishes must be reviewed and certified by the commission. Components such as framing and piping should match the roof color; and the installation should not permanently alter any feature of the building. Solar collectors should never be installed at the front of an historic building.
- **Steps, stairways and railings** can be an important feature of entryways and porches. They may be repaired or replaced in accordance with the guidelines on architectural features. Where possible, original features and detailing should be retained or repaired in the same design and material. The existing features may not be the original (this is especially true of steps), and careful restoration may be called for.



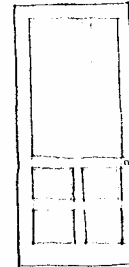
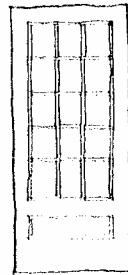
PORCH RAILINGS

- **Stonework** may be repaired, replaced or extended using the existing type of stone, jointing, pointing, color and finish. New stonework should be appropriate to the period and character of the building.
- **Storms/screens doors and windows** require a certificate for the initial installation, but not for seasonal changes from storm to screen and back again. The modern metal-framed products are acceptable. Simple storm doors are preferred so that they do not hide or compete with the door and doorway features. It is preferable that the storm door color matches the door. Storm windows should have a shape that makes them look like part of the

building, and their color should match that of the inner window and window trim. Wooden storm doors and windows in period styles are acceptable.



PREFERRED STYLE OF
INTERCHANGEABLE
STORM / SCREEN DOOR



APPROPRIATE
SCREEN DOOR

STORM AND SCREEN DOORS

- **Stucco repairs** should duplicate the existing surface as closely as possible in color, texture and overall appearance.
- **Swimming pools**, tennis courts and similar recreational facilities are permitted in historic districts provided that they meet other design qualifications and a certificate is obtained.
- **Windows** are a key architectural element and are always subject to certification by the commission; the extent of the review depends on the nature of the work proposed. The features and details of the window, the shape and size of the opening and the placement of windows on a façade all require attention. For repairs approval is routine when the new work duplicates the existing windows in scale, design and material. However, windows with snap-in or removable muntins will not be approved. Alterations, changes in location and installation or removal of windows require a more complete review. Vinyl replacement windows will not be approved.

The principle of “repair, don’t replace” holds especially true for windows, frames and trim. Whether they are plain and simple or unusual in design and rich in detail, windows play an important part in shaping the appearance of a building exterior. When windows become deteriorated, repairs should be attempted before complete and costly replacement. Maintenance problems can

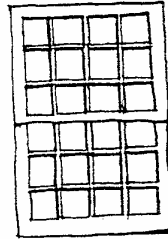
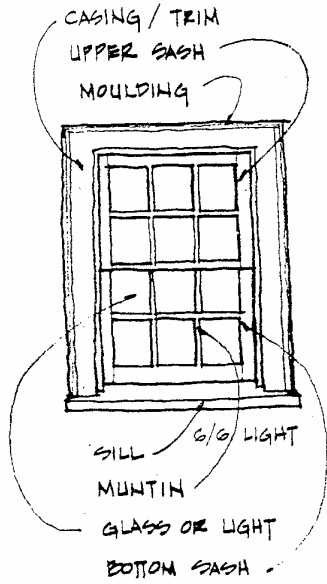
be rectified and energy efficiency increased. When replacing a window becomes unavoidable, consider whether the window has particular significance because of its features or location. If so, the original should be duplicated as closely as possible. There may be more leeway in dealing with less significant windows, but even those should be in keeping with the period and overall character of the building. Styles that are too antiquated will seem just as jarring as those that are too modern.

Period window styles are related to evolving techniques of building and manufacturing. Casement windows dominated buildings before the 18th century. Double-hung windows were used throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, but casement windows again became popular around the 1920's. Sliding windows appeared after 1945. Meanwhile, the size and number of panes, or "lights," also changed. Since large sheets of glass were not made, small panes in various arrangements including twelve-over-twelve, nine-over six and six-over six arrangements were used in 18th century buildings. The two-over-two pattern of larger panes became prevalent by 1850, but in the 1880's it gave way to the one-over-one window. Later on, multipaned windows were used again for decorative purposes. Windows can be obtained today in a great variety of stock styles and sizes.

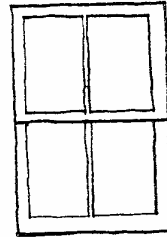
There can be much variation in the placement of windows across a facade, but careful observation will reveal a rhythm that should be preserved. Changes in a pattern of a front facade are best avoided; those elsewhere should be contemplated with caution. Along with the arrangement of the windows, the size of a window opening is an important feature. When new windows are installed as part of an addition or other major renovation, similar considerations apply. The windows should be consistent with one another in size, style and detail; they should be appropriate to the overall design of the new construction; and they should be in harmony with the windows of the existing building, although they may not be identical.

Acceptable window types:

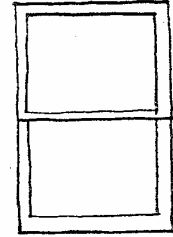
- Single pane true divided light double hung windows with a combination storm and screen are preferred.
- Simulated divided light windows with permanently affixed muntins on the exterior and interior will be considered with half screens. Snap-in grilles are never approved.



12/12 LIGHT

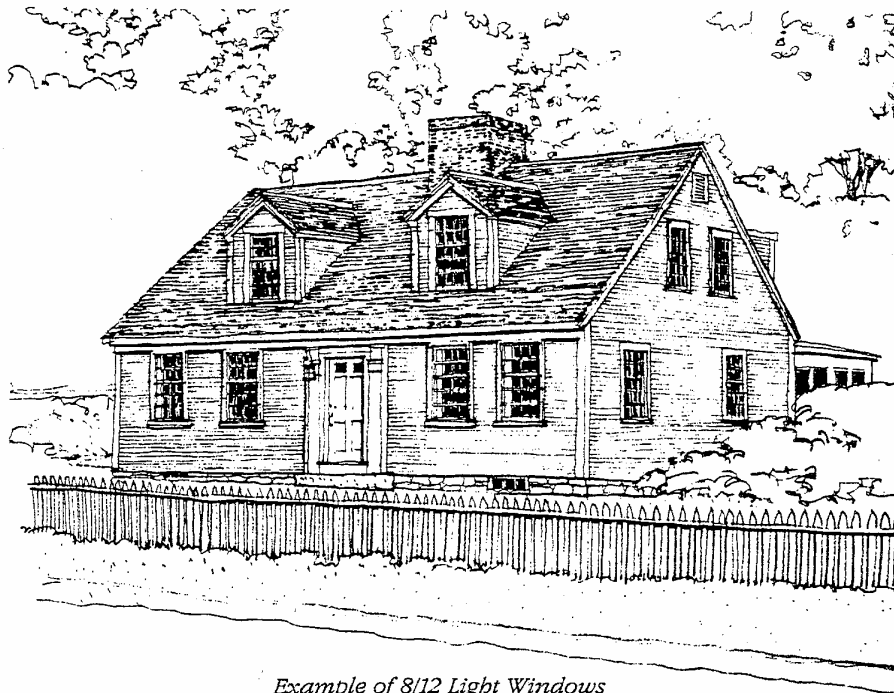


2/2 LIGHT



1/1 LIGHT

TRUE DIVIDED LIGHT WINDOWS - MUNTINS ARE NOT REMOVABLE.



Example of 8/12 Light Windows

Architectural Terms and Styles

