

Community Development

Planning Division

2255 W. Berry Avenue

Littleton, CO 80120

303-795-3748

Guidelines for Replacement of Historic Windows for Designated Historic Properties

The purpose of this guide is to provide information to owners of residential and commercial historic properties who are considering repair and/or replacement options for their windows. This guide pertains to properties that are listed on the Littleton Historic Register, including individual historic landmarks and structures in designated historic districts.

The guide is intended to help owners retain the historic character of their properties and consider options before making final window decisions. Repair of historic windows is always the first consideration for a property owner. If the windows are truly beyond repair, replacement shall be approved by the city when the criteria have been met according to this guide and the historic preservation code, which includes compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards.



Planning Your Project

Helpful Information to Know Before You Begin

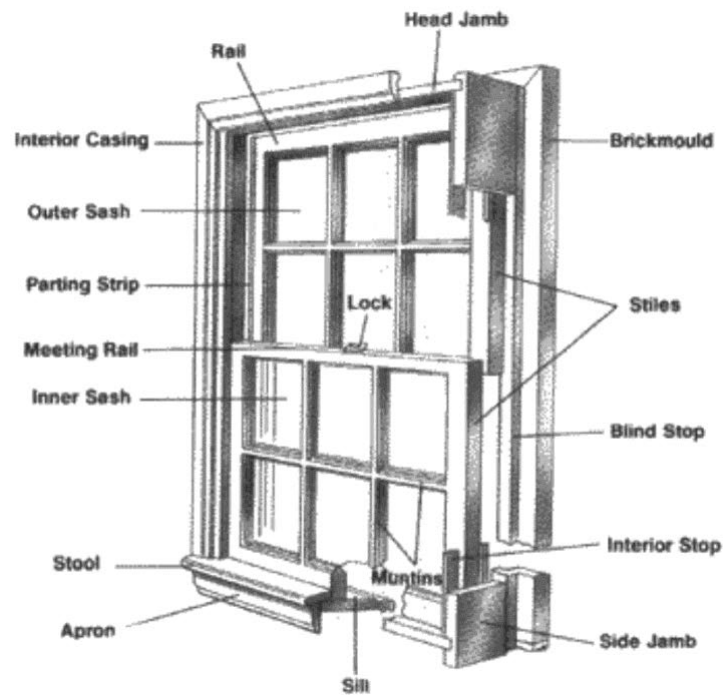
- Repair of existing windows does not require a building permit or a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Replacement of any existing window, whether historic or not, requires a building permit from the city.
- For properties on the Littleton Historic Register, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before a window can be replaced.

- All window projects must be consistent with the approval criteria for a Certificate of Appropriateness, which includes the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- Flexibility in meeting the requirements is given for windows not visible from the city right- of-way, including alleys for commercial properties.
- If all requirements of the Historic Preservation Code (Chapters 8 and 9, ULUC) and the requirements set forth in this policy are met, the application may be reviewed administratively by staff. No public hearing is required.
- Financial incentives may be available for your window project, including grants and tax credits. Please contact Community Development Department at 303-795-3719 for information.

Recommended Steps

1. Contact the Community Development Department and speak to a planner about your project. An on-site meeting may be arranged with the planner and a member of the Historical Preservation Board to provide expertise on window repair and replacement and assistance completing required forms.
2. Complete a window survey of all existing windows on your building to determine what action to take. A window survey form is provided on the city website. The form will prompt you to consider the type of windows currently on the structure and the condition of the windows. Again, the planner and a member of the Historical Preservation Board are available to assist with completion of the form.
3. Consider how existing windows may be repaired and how energy efficiency may be addressed. Most historic buildings can benefit from energy efficiency improvements without compromising the building's historic character.
4. For window replacement, an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is required. A pre-application meeting with the planner is required. At this meeting, you will have an opportunity to discuss the findings of your window survey and learn about the application process. As noted above, if all requirements of the Historic Preservation Code (Chapters 8 and 9, ULUC) and the requirements set forth in this policy are met, the application may be reviewed administratively by staff. No public hearing is required.
5. Upon approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for removal of a window, an application must be made for a building permit before replacement begins.
6. Following completion of the project, the planner will inspect the work to ensure the project was completed as approved.

Key Window Components of a 6 pane / 6 pane Double-Hung Window (6/6)



Window Replacement Guidelines

Windows not Visible from the Public Right-of-Way

Flexibility in meeting the guidelines will be considered for any window proposed for replacement on a property listed on the Littleton Historic Register not visible from the public street. For historic buildings in Downtown, windows cannot be visible from either the street or an alley. Each window shall be reviewed on a case-by case basis to ensure that the historic character of the property and of the historic district, if applicable, will not be impaired.

Acceptable Materials for Replacement Windows

Historic window frames can be constructed from a variety of materials, including wood, steel and aluminum. If not possible to replace the window with the same material, another material may be selected that closely replicates the look of the original window. The proposed material will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure compliance with the criteria in this policy. Vinyl replacement windows are generally not considered an acceptable choice because they cannot match the look of historic window frames.

Replacement Windows Shall Match the Design of the Historic Window Being Replaced

When selecting a replacement window, match the dimensions as follows:

- Install new windows that fit precisely into the historic window openings (*i.e.*, within ½" on each side);
- If the historic windows were recessed within the openings, install new windows that are recessed to match. If the historic windows were not recessed, then the new windows should not be recessed;
- Install new windows with an overall visible light transmittance rating of 0.5 or higher;
- Install new windows with rails, stiles and jambs that match those of the historic windows in profile and dimensions – the rails, stiles, and jambs should generally be within ½" of the originals;
- Install new windows with muntins that match those of the historic windows in profile and dimensions – the muntins should generally be within ¼" of the originals (*i.e.*, 1/1 replacing 1/1; 6/1 replacing 6/1);
- True divided lights are always preferred; however, simulated divided lights with interior and exterior grids and spacer bars between the glass may be considered and reviewed on a case-by-case basis;
- Install new windows that have the same method of operation as the historic windows (*i.e.*, casement for casement and double-hung for double-hung); and
- If the new windows propose a different method of operation, sashes, muntins and other window components shall be generally the same size as those on the historic windows.
- Windows in Mid-Century Modern structures may have different window materials, dimensions and components than those mentioned above. However, the same preservation principals shall apply. Replacement windows shall match the historic window design as closely as possible to maintain historic character.

Request to Replace Repairable Historic Windows

Occasionally, the cost of repairing a historic window can exceed the cost of replacing it. Replacement may be considered if the applicant provides cost estimates for repair vs. replacement, with the replacement costs based on windows that meet the guidelines set forth above.

For window replacement to be approved because of cost, the property owner should verify that the cost of repair will significantly exceed that of replacement (*i.e.*, it will be at least 1.5 times higher). The request should be accompanied by a statement explaining why the financial incentives available for repair cannot be used to offset the higher cost of repair.

Further Information on Window Repair and Replacement

For further information on window repair and replacement, please visit the city website at www.littletongov.org for links to articles and examples, and a list of suggested local window companies.

