



## WINDOW REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT FOR HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There are four basic steps for replacing windows on an historic building: 1) determining if the windows can be repaired rather than replaced, 2) identifying the appropriate replacement windows, as needed, for your building, 3) finding a company that manufactures and installs windows, and 4) getting a DC building permit, with approval from the Historic Preservation Office (HPO). The HPO staff can help you with each of these steps, as can a qualified architect or contractor familiar with historic buildings. You should always consult with the HPO *prior* to ordering any windows or commencing with the work.

### Window Repair

Windows are an important character-defining feature of any historic building, giving it a sense of scale, craftsmanship and proportion. If possible, original windows on historic buildings should be repaired rather than replaced. Existing windows can often be repaired, scraped of old paint, repainted and made more energy efficient with the installation of weather-stripping and/or insulated glazing at a fraction of the cost of installing replacement windows. This can be especially cost-effective for windows of an unusual shape or character that would be difficult and costly to replicate. Even if the operable sash is beyond repair, it may be possible to save the original frames and exterior trim.

### Window Replacement

Proposals for replacement should clearly document the existing condition and appearance of the windows with photographs. If the windows on an historic building are beyond repair or are not original to the building, replacement may be warranted. The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) has adopted regulations requiring that any replacement window on a street-fronting elevation or which is highly visible from a public street match the visual qualities of the original windows including profiles, dimensions, operability, light configuration (the number and layout of glass panes), and finish. Vinyl windows cannot be approved on these visible elevations, although fiberglass, wood composites, and clad wood windows are acceptable if they replicate the visual characteristics of a wood window. The standards for replacement windows facing onto a rear yard, internal courtyard or lightwell that are not visible from a public street are more flexible and typically do not require that these visual characteristics of a traditional window be replicated.

The evolution of window and glass technology through the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as changing architectural styles, have resulted in a rich variety of window sizes, shapes, and designs. Accordingly, there is no single “right” replacement window suitable for all historic buildings. With photographs of your building, the HPO staff can help you determine the appropriate windows for your style of building.

The HPRB’s Window Standards (DCMR Title 10-C, Chapter 23) may be accessed at [www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov) or by calling the HPO at 442-8800.



### Sources for Window Repair and Replacement

Many of the window companies listed below offer sash replacement packages that are less expensive than full window replacements, while retention of the wood frames maintains much of the appearance of the original windows.

#### Window Repair

Bi-Glass	202-638-5737	(retrofits insulated glass into existing sash)
The Craftsmen Group, Inc.	202-332-3700	(window repair, restoration and replication)
Windows Craft	202-228-6660	(window repair, restoration and replication)
Mid-Atlantic Wood Works	703-401-4511	(window repair, restoration and replication)
Stephen Ortado	202-437-7567/686-0135	(window repair)
Mark Wesolowski	301-855-1913	(window repair and replication)
Adams Morgan Stained Glass	202-232-8391	(leaded and stained glass repair, fabrication)

#### New Wood Windows

The following are phone numbers and websites for the headquarters of some companies that make wood windows. *Pay close attention as you browse their catalogs. Although these companies manufacture wood windows, they also make other types of windows, many of which may not be appropriate for historic buildings.* If you contact the company headquarters, they will give you the name of their local sales representative. Also, many of these window lines can be ordered through larger lumber suppliers, such as Smoot (703-823-2100), TW Perry (301-652-2600) or Galliher & Huguely (202-723-1000);

Eagle	800-453-3633	<a href="http://www.eaglewindows.com">www.eaglewindows.com</a>
Kolbe & Kolbe	715-842-5666	<a href="http://www.kolbeandkolbe.com">www.kolbeandkolbe.com</a>
Lincoln	715-536-2461	<a href="http://www.lincolnwindows.com">www.lincolnwindows.com</a>
Loewen Windows & Doors	301-215-9195	<a href="http://www.loewen.com">www.loewen.com</a>
MW Windows	800-999-9771	<a href="http://www.mwwindows.com">www.mwwindows.com</a>
Marvin Windows & Doors	800-346-5128	<a href="http://www.marvin.com">www.marvin.com</a>
Pella	800-597-3552	<a href="http://www.pella.com">www.pella.com</a>
Jeld-wen (incl. Pozzi & Norco)	800-257-9663	<a href="http://www.jeld-wen.com">www.jeld-wen.com</a>
TrimLine Windows Inc.	800-213-6100	<a href="http://www.trimlinewindows.com">www.trimlinewindows.com</a>
Weathershield	800-222-2995	<a href="http://www.weathershield.com">www.weathershield.com</a>

Some of these companies provide installation services, while others simply provide the window for a contractor to install. Check the Yellow Pages under “Windows” for independent installers. As with any contractor, make sure the company is licensed and bonded in the District of Columbia, and can provide references of comparable work.

### The Building Permit

Replacing windows in an historic district requires that you obtain a DC building permit. You will need: 1) photographs of the building sufficient to show the building and existing windows, and 2) information on the proposed replacements, such as a specification sheet or catalogue provided by the manufacturer, or architectural drawings. With those in hand, proceed to the Permit Center at 1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. Permit applications will be provided at the Permit Center, or you may download the form at [www.dkra.dc.gov](http://www.dkra.dc.gov). For any questions, please call HPO at 442-8800 to speak to a preservation specialist on our staff.