

Brett Kemp Kemp's Windows

Window info:

Every home, historic or no, has its own unique challenges regarding windows, a vital aspect to weather protection, security, beauty, etc. of the home.

City, State and National guidelines toward historic homes vary by degree. Most require that the window replacement require a paintable surface, precluding any window that is not wood or fiberglass.

If the original window cannot be utilized, installing new Wooden windows is tricky. Most are designed to not be retrofitted, so the wood buck must be removed; this, along with changing the trim, is very expensive. Most new wooden windows require a new 'knife' to be made, also very expensive. Often the new wooden window is too thick for the original spacing, along with other issues. There are no fully wooden windows that have more than a year warranty, and none with a lifetime guarantee; this is because wooden windows are no longer made with old-growth heartwood, as in the past, and the new wood, often pine, simply does not hold up to weather, especially heat.

The only "wooden" window with a lifetime guarantee is a hybrid; wood on the inside and fiberglass on the outside. (Milguard "essence" brand). This is because fiberglass is the only material that does not have any heat issues, and can be painted.

There are retrofitting "sash kits", but these have no frame, and only the sash is replaced. However, they only work on a perfect 'plumb'. They also tend to perform poorly because they run on a vinyl track, which can be seen from the outside. The vinyl is thin and tends to warp fairly quickly.

Lastly, there are 'clad' windows, made of metal or fiberglass, but these are rarely a good solution; each has its own challenges due to their fabrication.

The only really high quality, lasting window available today at a reasonable price is the fiberglass window, which comes with a life-time guarantee, can be painted, and designed to replace the wooden window exactly, with no changes to the exterior look.

Francisco Antin