



# OLD GEORGETOWN BOARD DESIGN GUIDELINES WINDOWS

Windows are a character-defining feature of a building that serve both functional and aesthetic purposes. The size, type, location, and trim of windows help define a building's architectural style, and changes to windows can have a dramatic impact on a building's appearance. Collectively, windows help define the overall character of Georgetown. The Old Georgetown Board supports stylistically appropriate replacement windows where original or historic windows do not exist. Generally, windows installed prior to 1950 are considered historic. Applicants should always arrange a site visit with Old Georgetown Board staff so that staff can make a determination on the age of existing windows and recommendations for appropriate replacements.



An architectural drawing of the same houses in the photo (right), from 1951 showing the original window style as two-over-two. CFA staff will conduct research to determine the historically correct style of windows for a property.



The existing six-over-six windows were installed on this pair of houses in 1951. During the mid-century, many homeowners in Georgetown replaced historic windows with colonial style windows in an attempt to make the house appear older than it was.

## RECOMMENDED

- Retain and repair historic window panes, sashes and frames using a qualified window restoration specialist.
- Where original brickmold exists, use sash kits that preserve the historic, hand-worked frames.
- Select replacement windows that are appropriate to the historic period or architectural style of the building.
- Install replacement windows that fit the original window opening, such as full-frame replacements or sash kits.
- Single-glazed windows on front and side elevations. Where added energy efficiency is desired, interior storm windows are preferred.
- Perform regular painting and re-sealing of windows to ensure longevity of windows and to promote sustainability.

## NOT RECOMMENDED

- Any material other than wood on street-facing elevations.
- Use of insert windows that decrease the overall glass area.
- Insulated or double-glazed windows on street-facing elevations.
- Tinted or reflective glass.
- Vinyl windows.
- Any window that has "sandwich" muntins between the glass, snap-on, or removable muntins.
- Visible vinyl jamb liners.
- Exterior screens are discouraged, but half-screens with high transparency are acceptable.

## WHAT ABOUT MODERN MATERIALS?

Generally, aluminum-clad wood, fiberglass or wood composite, and metal are acceptable in minimally visible locations or on non-street facing elevations of new construction and those buildings or additions constructed after 1975. Vinyl is not appropriate. Windows should have clear and untinted glass and internal spacer bars in a medium value color.

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

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## SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

- A map or aerial image showing the property's location in Georgetown.
- A photo showing the entire building facade(s). If you are not submitting architectural drawings, please mark up a copy of your photo to show which windows are proposed for replacement and key the window in the photograph to your cut sheet.
- Photos that show the existing windows' condition and design. It is generally a good idea to include two or three photographs from the exterior that depict the typical condition of the windows.
- An elevation drawing of the existing and proposed window replacement, if proposing alterations to the window openings or substantial renovation.
- Specifications and/or cut sheets that describe the proposed replacement windows. This is generally provided by the window sales rep or contractor. This should include a line-item cut sheet, with details for each window proposed for replacement with information such as the installation method, material, hardware, glass type, measurements, and muntin profiles.
- A measured section drawing through the jamb of the proposed window(s) and the existing window(s)
- A section drawing with dimensions of the proposed muntin if multi-light windows are proposed.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

[Anatomy of a window](#)

[District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office Window Repair and Replacement Preservation and Design Guidelines](#)

[The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, & Reconstructing Historic Buildings](#)

[Old Georgetown Board and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts website](#)

## HELPFUL RESEARCH ON WINDOW REPLACEMENT

[Forbes Magazine - Don't Buy Replacement Windows for Your Old House](#)

[Saving Windows, Saving Money: Evaluating the Energy Performance of Window Retrofit and Replacement](#)