

Technical Guides for Exterior Alterations



A Practical Series for the Preservation and Maintenance of Rockville's Historic Resources

13: Storm Windows and Storm Doors¹

Background

Windows and doors are prominent features of a building. Their design, size, shape and decorative elements help establish the architectural character of the building and contribute to the historic value of the site. Storm windows and storm doors are often recommended for protecting the original doors and windows and their paint finishes from the effects of sun and rain, and for helping with increased energy efficiency. According to the National Park Service *Preservation Brief #3*, exterior storm windows cut energy loss by half while protecting the historic materials. They will also extend the time between re-painting, and the triple-track storm windows are easy to change with the seasons. Appropriate storm windows and doors are, therefore, eligible for historic tax credits at both the local, state and federal levels.

HDC Policy

The Historic District Commission follows *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, and the accompanying *Guidelines*, in recommending the repair and retention of original doors and windows, and the use of storm windows and doors for protection and to provide desired energy savings. Exterior storm windows (wood, triple-track aluminum) are more typical, although interior storm windows are an alternative and may be installed without a Certificate of Approval.

Exterior Storm Window guidelines:

- The storm windows shall match the size of the window opening to avoid reducing the area of light.
- Meeting rails of storm windows shall align with meeting rails of historic windows.
- Storm windows can be made of a variety of materials, although wood was used historically, and aluminum is the most common material today.
- Storm windows, including the frame, shall be finished or painted the window sash or trim color. Unfinished aluminum is not recommended and should be avoided.

- Care must be taken during installation not to damage the historic window and frame.
- With the exception of the weep holes at the bottom of the frame, storm windows should be installed with the addition of a bead of caulk on the frame to reduce air infiltration. Weep holes must be maintained at the bottom of the storm windows to reduce condensation and prevent deterioration of the sill.

Storm Doors

- The design of the storm door shall be compatible with the architectural character of the building. A full-light door, which provides a full view of the original door, may be appropriate.
- If a screen door is to be installed, select a door with as much screen area as possible to provide a view of the original door.
- Storm and screen doors that are not full-light doors should complement the style and glazing pattern of the existing door.
- Storm and screen doors are available in a variety of materials, although wood was used historically. The new door design should be consistent with the style of the house.

If approved by the HDC, the replacement of original windows, storm windows and doors may be eligible for 10 percent Montgomery County and 20 percent state tax credits. An HDC certificate of approval for the addition of exterior storm doors or windows should be obtained **before purchasing** windows and well before beginning the work. Interior storm windows are also eligible but do not require a certificate of approval. To preserve your tax credit claim, the original doors and windows should be documented with photographs before and after installation of the storm doors/windows. Work done without an HDC certificate of approval is not eligible for the tax credits.

¹ This Technical Guide was adapted from the Maryland Association of Historic Districts Commissions *HANDBOOK*.

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13: Storm Windows and Storm Doors *(continued)*

Certificate of Approval

For Storm Windows and Storm or Screen Doors:

- Photographs of the feature to be protected
- Specifications for the proposed storm windows/doors, including material and finish
- Product brochure, if available

Tax Credit Information

Tax credits do apply. To maintain eligibility, please have before and after photographs of the work. Obtain HDC approval prior to undertaking the work if a COA is required, and make sure you follow all zoning requirements. Work done without a required HDC Certificate of Approval is not eligible for the tax credits. Forms are available on the City Web site or at the CPDS information desk.

Contact Us

For additional information and questions, please contact:
Historic District Commission
Department of Community Planning and
Development Services

Rockville City Hall
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850
240-314-8230 voice
240-314-8210 fax
history@rockvillemd.gov

Additional information

Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation, (1995), National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/standguide

National Park Service, *Preservation Briefs* at <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>

For information on the maintenance and rehabilitation of older homes, see www.cr.nps.gov/architecture/htm.

For suppliers and product information, see www.oldhouseweb.net.