

4. Windows and Doors

Preserve the original design of windows and doors that help define the architectural character of an existing building and restore those that were previously altered. Other windows and doors in existing or new buildings should harmonise with the building and streetscape.

The design of windows and doors plays an important role in defining the character of a building. Firstly, the pattern of window and door openings within the masonry walls is vital to the overall facade composition. Secondly, the style of the window itself is almost always an important part of the building design . . . something looks out-of-place when the style is changed, especially in an ensemble or streetscape with similar windows. Finally, the size and proportions of windows and their subdivisions helps give a human, residential scale to houses; this is lost if, for example, a complex window design is replaced with a single, large pane of glass.



Original ensemble



Unacceptable modification to the ensemble



Poorly-considered modifications to window and door design can alter the character of an ensemble. An ensemble includes semi-detached buildings as well as rows of similar buildings (see definition in booklet 1, page 6).



SDL (Simulated Divided Lites) refers to windows with fully-profiled muntins that cover both sides of a thermal glass panel to create the effect of a series of smaller window panes. Generally, SDLs should include spacer bars in between the muntins within the thermal glass.



4.1 General Design considerations

Windows and doors on residential buildings (including those converted to other uses) must be of a residential scale and design.

4.1.1 Dimensions

Excessively large windows should be avoided, especially in residential areas.

4.1.2 Use of commercial type windows and doors

In residential areas, curtain-walls and commercial-type detailing should be avoided, as should metallic colours for frames and muntins.

4.1.3 Transparency

All surfaces visually expressed as windows should be transparent. Tinted glass is not appropriate for residential buildings or buildings in residential areas and mirrored glass is unacceptable on any building. The use of reflecting infill panels should be avoided. Windows should not be painted or blocked with cabinets, displays or signs in a way that undermines its general transparency.

4.1.4 Consistency

All windows and doors in an architectural ensemble, facing the public way, should have a consistent treatment; equivalent windows and doors in each of the buildings should be identical. All windows and doors on all facades of a detached building should also have a consistent treatment.

4.1.5 Muntins

Where required, windows should be subdivided into individual panes with real muntin bars. Well-designed SDL windows might be acceptable but clip-in muntins are unacceptable. Where simulated leading is introduced, it should be affixed to both sides of the glass and be same width, thickness and colour as traditional true lead came (subdivision).

4.1.6 Materials for windows and doors

The aesthetic requirements for replacement of windows and doors are more stringent according to the architectural significance of the building. PVC windows are unacceptable on category I* and category I buildings. PVC and metal windows are generally unacceptable on category II buildings.

All exterior wood used in windows and doors must be painted (or stained) an opaque colour. Wood-coloured stains or semi-transparent stains that let the wood grain show through are generally not acceptable, except for doors. *This section should be read in conjunction with table 4.2.2*

4.2 Windows and doors in existing buildings

Retain the design of windows and doors that help define the character of existing buildings, or replace them with identical copies.

4.2.1 Preservation of existing character-defining windows and doors

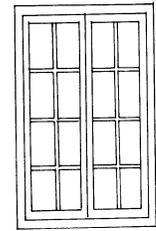
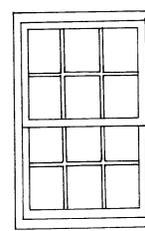
Retain existing character-defining windows and doors by maintaining them properly and repairing them when necessary. It is particularly important to preserve original doors and windows with decorative woodwork, leaded or stained glass, curved window panes, and other examples of distinctive craftsmanship, as well as all original windows and doors in Category I* and I buildings.

Older wood doors and windows can often be repaired and continue to serve better than many replacements. Rotten portions can be replaced and weather-stripping will make doors and windows weathertight. Even if a few windows are beyond repair, it is probably more economical to replace those few with matching, custom-made wood windows rather than change all of the windows.

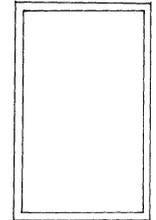
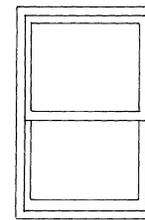
4.2.2 Replacement of character-defining windows and doors

Replacements should fit exactly within the existing masonry openings and should match the original in type of operation (eg. double-hung, casement), proportions, divisions, depth of inset into the wall, and detail of framing elements. The trim elements surrounding the frames, the sill and the lintel should be retained or replaced to match the original. So-called “double-hung replacement windows” that are actually casement windows with a horizontal bar are not acceptable in this situation. Sliding windows are generally unacceptable.

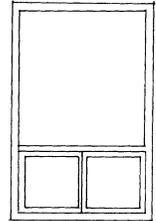
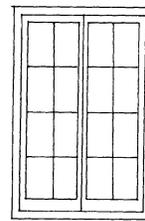
The front door design of Westmount residential buildings usually includes a window inserted in a decorative frame and constitutes a defining characteristic that must be preserved or replaced to match the existing.



1. original windows

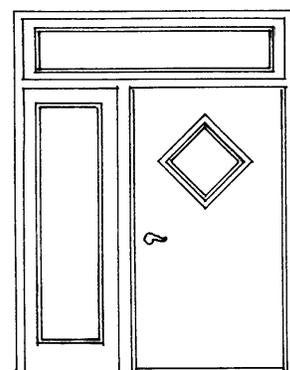
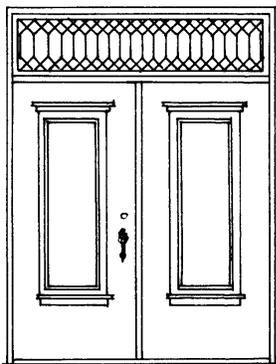


2. unacceptable replacements



3. unacceptable replacements

Do not replace original windows with inappropriate styles such as (2) or (3) as this changes proportion and character. If a window must be replaced, to make an exact copy.



The front doors of older Westmount homes were often made up of well-crafted glazed doors with glass transoms (left). A replacement of a totally different design is unacceptable (right).

Table 4.2.2

Replacement of windows and doors

| Category | Windows | Doors |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Category I* Exceptional</p> | <p>Original windows must be preserved and maintained. If it is impossible to retain the original, their replacement must match the original in material, details and divisions.</p> <p>The replacement windows must be wood if the original windows were wood.</p> | <p>Original doors must be preserved and maintained. An original wood door facing the street or found in the principal facades must be replaced by a wood door matching the original.</p> |
| <p>Category I Important</p> | <p>It is recommended that original windows be preserved and maintained. It is also recommended that wood windows be replaced by wood windows.</p> <p>However, high quality metal-clad wood windows might be acceptable provided the profiles match the original details and divisions.</p> | <p>Original doors must be preserved and maintained. An original wood door facing the street or found in the principal facades must be replaced by a wood door matching the original.</p> |
| <p>Category II Significant</p> | <p>It is recommended that original windows be preserved and maintained. It is also recommended that wood windows be replaced by wood windows.</p> <p>However, high quality metal-clad wood windows might be acceptable provided the profiles match the original details and divisions.</p> <p>Some variations of PVC or metal windows that are true to the original in terms of form, proportions, details and size of sash, frame and mullions may be considered.</p> | <p>Original doors must be preserved and maintained. An original wood door facing the street or found in the principal facades must be replaced by a wood door matching the original.</p> <p>Doors in other locations may be replaced by either a wood or heavy gauge metal door provided the profiles are identical to the original wood details.</p> |
| <p>Category III Neutral</p> | <p>The replacement of the windows has to be harmonious with the style of the house.</p> | <p>Doors may be replaced by either a wood or heavy gauge metal.</p> |

4.2.3 Replacement of non-significant windows and doors

In the few cases of non-significant windows and doors (ex. those with no special features on category III buildings that are not part of an ensemble, or those on rear facades of row houses), changing the type of operation or modifying divisions may be acceptable provided the proposed window or door design is appropriate to the building and streetscape.

The fact that a few other buildings in an architectural ensemble or streetscape have had their windows inappropriately changed sometime in the past does not justify copying the inappropriate replacement or other modifications not in conformity with these guidelines.

4.2.4 Previously changed windows and doors

If the windows or doors of a building had previously been inappropriately changed, the new ones must nevertheless conform to this set of guidelines.

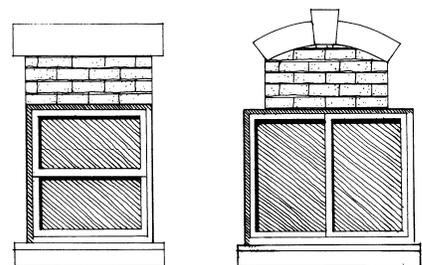
4.2.5 Exterior (storm) windows

If exterior (storm) windows were part of the original design of a building, replacement windows should match these windows in style and colour. However, if the house was originally designed with one window style and storm windows were added later, the replacement should match the original window. Unfinished aluminum storm windows or exterior windows whose divisions do not line up with those of the interior window are not acceptable.

Traditionally, storm windows were removed in the summer. Often, they were of a different style than the interior windows (eg. casement storm windows on double-hung interior windows) and they may have been more simply detailed than interior windows.

4.2.6 Modifications to window and door openings

The addition of new window or door openings in masonry walls, as well as the modification or elimination of existing openings, are generally not acceptable in the character-defining facades of category I and II buildings. Modifications to existing window and doors openings or the addition of new ones could be considered on secondary facades, provided they respect the general design principles of the style of building and the windows themselves use the same design as the existing ones.



Window openings should not be enlarged or blocked.

4.3 Additions and new buildings

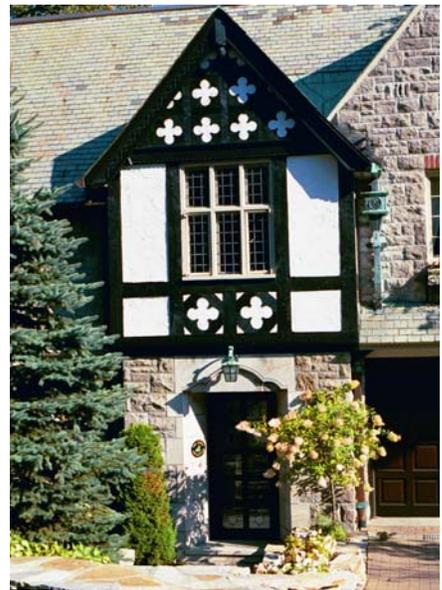
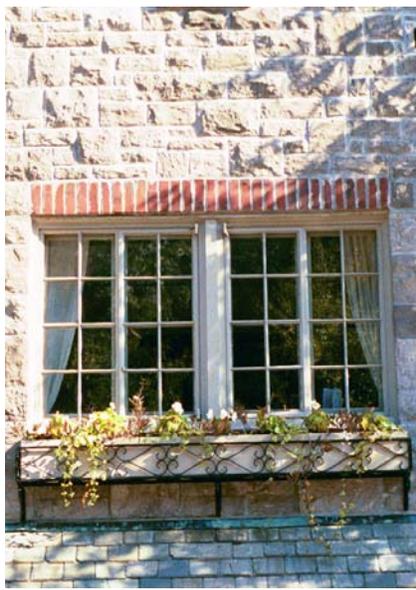
In new buildings, additions and major alterations, windows and doors should harmonise with the existing and surrounding buildings.

4.3.1 Dimensions

Window and door openings should be of similar size and proportion.

4.3.2 Style

Windows should be of a similar style to the existing building (in the case of an addition) and to the predominant style, if any, of the streetscape and area. Front doors should include a glazed panel inserted in a decorative frame.



4.4 Shutters and awnings

Shutters should be conceived in a manner that is appropriate to the building design. Awnings on residential buildings are generally unacceptable; however, in those cases where they were traditionally used (i.e. at the rear of buildings to shade patios) they might be acceptable.

4.4.1 Shutters

Shutters, whether louvered or panelled, should be operable, in wood and should be sized and hung so that, if closed, they would exactly cover the windows.

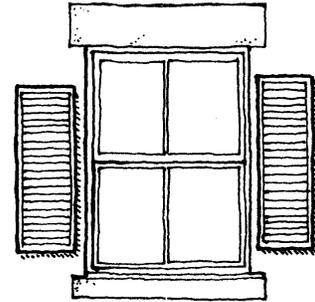
4.4.2 Awnings

Awnings should be in canvas and fit within the window or door openings. Plastic and sheet metal awnings are unsuitable for older residential buildings.

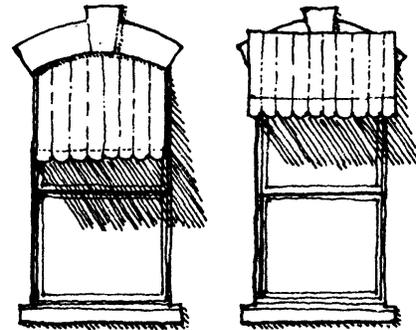
An awning is made of canvas or a similar material, is retractable, is angled or curved and should be designed to fit within a window or door opening. A canopy is a fixed portion of the building in a permanent material such as metal or concrete and is usually horizontal.

4.4.3 Relation to building

Shutters and awnings should complement and not obscure the architectural features of the building.



Shutters should be sized and hung so that, if closed, they would cover the windows, unlike this example.



If awnings are to be installed, they should fit into the opening in the wall (left) and not mask the architectural features of the building (right).

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