

City of Jacksonville

Historic Preservation Commission

SPRING 2007 NEWSLETTER

Incentives: Help for your home

One of the biggest deterrents to restoration and rehabilitation projects is the cost. While grant funds are very hard to get, and typically reserved for municipally and non-profit projects, there is some help for the homeowner.

The Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program is a little known benefit available for homes classified as a contributing structure within a National Register Historic District, like the one here in Jacksonville.

This freeze may be used in conjunction with or in lieu of local improvement tax freezes. Always check with local preservation commission and tax assessment officials



before beginning any project. The Property Tax Assessment Freeze is particularly helpful for projects on structures that are currently in a neglected state.

This Program effectively freezes the tax assessment at present rates for a period of eight years at the pre-rehabilitation rate, and then rises gradually to its regular tax assessment rate over four years. Eligible properties include owner occupied single-family homes and apartments, providing an owner occupies one of the units. Co-ops and condominiums may also qualify.

This incentive is administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) and requires a site visit by a state historic preservation officer who would determine the qualification and provide advice on improvements to ensure compliance with Secretary of Interior Standards for preservation. A form must be completed and filed with IHPA prior to the commencement of work. Additional information is available on the IHPA web site at www.illinoishistory.gov

Several other incentive programs exist for commercial use or depreciable property. Jacksonville Main Street's web site provides a recap on many of these initiatives at www.jacksonvillemainstreet.com

Paint: What Colors are Right?

Often, a home's historical colors might surprise the owners, and the neighbors – especially in “white clapboard with black shutter” areas! It isn't rare to find yellow ochre, dark brown trim, red highlights, and green shutters when researching color selections of the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Some choices could be blamed on people of the day having bad taste, or it could be attributed to incorrect ideals of what historic houses should look like.

The truth is that color, even rather bright hues, was used in previous generations. Reintroducing them in a conservatively colored neighborhood can add vibrancy and interest to an otherwise monochromatic street.

Researching original colors is not always difficult. Most qualified painters can determine early colors that still exist under numerous layers of paint by removing topcoats. Pictures, historical records, and property documentation may give insight to original color schemes also. In the absence of evidence, several reputable paint manufacturers supply sample brochures suggesting various historic period schemes based on their own extensive research.

The critical thing is that materials, in particular wood, have a good coating of paint to protect it from decay. Applied correctly (doing exactly what the paint can says), a good paint job can last more than ten years before showing signs of failure. Many manufacturers now offer rather long warranties on the performance of their paint when properly applied.

Regardless of the color palette, painting materials that were originally coated retains the historic integrity of the house... vinyl does not, and in fact, contributes to the further material decay. It is vital to make all necessary repairs before painting. Address moisture problems before simply covering it up if a lasting application is desired.

Lastly, when using multiple colors (common on old homes), apply different hues where changes in materials or structural elements occur, like on dormers, fish scales, ornamentation, etc.



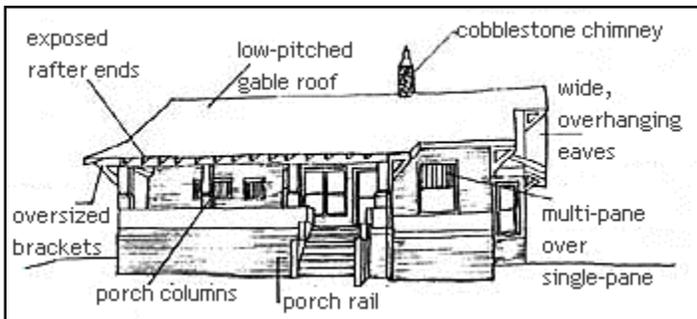
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What Style Is Your House?

Bungalow (1910-1930)

The bungalow style was popular in the western United States. Simpler than the Victorians that preceded them, bungalows are typically parked in neat rows in city neighborhoods as low cost, simple living quarters with an artistic touch to many Americans getting by on modest means. With special features of style, simplicity, convenience, sound construction, and excellent plumbing, the bungalow filled more than the need for shelter; It provided fulfillment of the American dream.



A number of features identify bungalow. Typically, they have one or more low-pitched overhanging gables on a 1 or 1½ story structure. The overall architecture has a low profile with prominent horizontal accents. Exposed beams and projecting brackets emphasize the structural form and give a “craftsman” look. Natural materials like wooden shingles and clapboards, cobblestones, and rough-faced brick are used for exterior walls, porch columns, and chimneys. Porches extend across the width of the house, supported by stocky or battered columns. Windows are frequently either casement or double hung with many smaller panes combined with a larger, single pane.

There are several variations of bungalows, classified as California (at right), Arts and Crafts, Cape Cod, Chicago,

Mission, Prairie, Pueblo, Tudor, and Moderne. Newer homes with bungalow traits are often dubbed “bungaloids.”



Why Wood Windows?

The Historic Preservation Commission and Secretary of Interior Standards both call for retaining and restoring original wood windows whenever possible. But, homeowners have heard the replacement window sales pitch and argue the old windows are inefficient and drafty.

“Not so,” say Cody Wright and Chalmer Herring, co-owners of Hickory Flats Group (HFG) a Winchester-based restoration company with over 33 years of combined preservation experience. Besides restoring historic wood windows, the family owned and operated company restores Mesker sheet metal facades and wood or metal cornices working throughout Illinois. HFG is certified both a lead safe workplace and Cathedral Stone masonry and stone restoration/repair.

HFG counters the new-is-better theory by pointing out that the R2-factor of double pane replacement windows is the same factor given to properly fitting wood windows with interior or exterior storms, noting that the number of panes plus the space between gives the insulation value.

While gaps and improperly functioning sashes are another argument for replacement, these are easily repaired, claim HFG, adding that the century-old weight and sash system is one of the longest lasting and most efficient, its design even allowing for maintenance. Properly adjusted weights even allow 100-pound well-fitted windows to be lifted with two fingers. Conversely, new window spring-and-plastic systems begin losing strength within as little as 3 years due to long period of spring compression, with complete failure often seen in less than 10 years.

Even rotted windows can be salvaged so long as 75% of the wood remains. Hickory Flats is quick to tout the benefits of retaining the old growth wood, a higher quality material than the wood available today. When properly cared for and combined with new weight ropes, restored wood windows can easily last another hundred years.

Hickory Flats also states that the price of restoration is considerably less than the price for replacement windows of comparable size, resulting in a superior outcome with longer life. Rehabilitation assures proper fit and style for the structure, maintaining a home’s historical integrity for many years to come.

In addition to doing window restoration at Jacksonville Main Street’s New Life Project at 312 N. Church Street, Hickory Flats Group has completed Mesker cornice restoration at First Bank in Winchester and copper sheet metal bay window and cornice rehabilitation at Maldener’s Restaurant in Springfield. They won the 2005 Landmarks Illinois Richard H Driehaus Foundation Preservation Award for restoration of the East School Clock-tower in Pittsfield. HFG takes on projects varying in size from a single window to whole house restoration.

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...more styles in the next edition!