City of Jacksonville
Historic Preservation Commission
WINTER 2011 NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

The National Trust Announces SavetheWindows.org

Despite what window manufactures say, replacing old windows is not an open and shut case. A new social media campaign by The National Trust for Historic Preservation hopes to help spread the word that people have options – choices – for improving the energy efficiency of their home's windows.

Savethewindows.org is a site where you can learn about why retaining your home's existing windows is a good option over replacement and ways to help maintain your historic windows.

Looking for ways to improve your windows' energy efficiency? Check out the How-To Guides or find a repair workshop to learn what you can do. And look at the Contractor Guide to locate a contractor in your community. Already know of a great contractor in your area? Tell them, and they will add them to the Contractor Guide.

How can you help spread the word about the importance of holding on to historic windows?

- Share the Save the Windows video on Facebook, Twitter, your website, or by email. Distribute it as widely as possible and encourage folks to pass it on.
- Take action to support the House Home Star bill.
- Share this information with friends and contacts who agree that saving existing windows makes environmental and financial sense and preserves the character of homes.

How can you Save the Windows in your home? Thinking of replacing your windows to save energy?

- Get an energy audit. Before buying, find out how to maximize your energy savings; you may be surprised by what you learn about the best ways to retrofit your home.
- Learn how to fix your windows yourself! With just a little guidance and a few small tools, you can make repairs and retrofit your windows yourself. Look over National Trust's list of workshops nationwide and online training videos.
- Improve the performance of your existing windows by caulking around window openings on the outside to stop air from getting in and around window trim on the inside to block drafts. Add weather stripping to the window sash. Use storm windows or thermal panels on the interior or exterior. (These may also qualify for a tax credit.)
- Install insulated shades or blinds (that may qualify for tax credits) or thermal curtains/drapes to block cold and heat.
- Visit the Windows Page at www.preservationnation.org
- Network with other homeowners to share tips, stories, and information at @home (another resource for owners of older homes from National Trust) and share your success by uploading a picture of your windows there too!

Great Resources...

For many owners of older property, there seem to be more questions than answers regarding how to retain the historic integrity of your building while saving money, energy, and achieving the desired look. Help is available and often free… if you know where to look:

- The National Trust for Historic Preservation has a wide selection of articles and resource materials to help you with everything from explaining the Secretary of Interior Standards to how to save your old windows (see left). Visit their website at www.preservationnation.org for more information.

- Old House Journal on line is a great source of technical and practical information for virtually any old home project. At www.oldhouseonline.com you will find advice and how-to information on restoring almost anything! Plus there's great stories from other people in similar circumstances and lots of contacts for where to buy products.
- Another informative site with tips, ideas, and photos for many projects and products for older homes is www.period-homes.com from Clem Labine, a well-known chemical engineer-turned-editor-turned-preservationist. Clem Labine's company also publishes several other good resource periodicals, like www.traditional-building.com
- To learn more about what tax credits or incentives are available for energy conservation upgrades to your building, go to www.energystar.gov as well as tips for other types of construction and renovations. The IRS website will also explain these benefits, but may not be as easy to understand for some: www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=154657,00.html or for a more straightforward description, go to www.taxes.about.com
- The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's website offers a great deal of information about State and Federal programs, plus advice on preferred practices. Go to www.illinoishistory.gov and click on Preservation Services in the drop-down menu on the left, then peruse the listing of available features on the right.

Most of these internet resources also provide information on how to subscribe to their online or printed materials and publications.

What Style is Your House?

Ranch (1932-present)

Also called a Western Ranch or a California Rambler, this modern style of house architecture was built for casual family living. California architect Cliff May is credited with designing and building the first of this post-Arts and Crafts style with influences from the Haciendas found in the Southwest, plus the bungalow and Prairie Styles. By the mid-1930s, the style had been published and it was gaining national attention. Many versions of this low house followed the contours of the land around it, featured enclosed courtyards or patios, and carefully planned views of the nature nearby.

Modern Ranches incorporated the Southwest/Spanish influences in a contemporary way to create the Suburban Ranch house that symbolizes modern America.

Post-War versions called tract-houses or mall-houses sprouted up across the country in the building boom of the 1950s-60s. Some remained legitimately Western in feeling, while others were Colonialized with columns and faux shutters. Sizes and styles of the Ranch home were adapted to lot sizes and colder climates, often eliminating many of the characteristic features, yet the term "Ranch" stuck and was used to describe virtually all one-story suburban tract house construction into the 1970s. Later, the style evolved into the split-level house style.

Eischler Homes and Alexander Homes, styles from California real estate developers, are more variations of the classic Ranch Style.

Typical features of a true Ranch:

- Ground-hugging single story design
- Low roof lines and deep eaves
- Vernacular materials found locally by area (brick, stone, wood, etc.)
- Anonymous to the street with a flat façade, covered entry at grade, and few street-side windows but open to back gardens
- Simple floor plan that emphasizes openness and efficient use of space
- One room deep and rectangular, L-shaped, or U-shaped layout to surround a patio and landscaping features or pools
- Expanses of glass and horizontal windows, often with sliding glass doors and double hung windows
- Attached garage, often visible from the street
- Lack of decorative detailing aside from ornamental shutters

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"What Style is Your House?" was a regular feature of early HPC Newsletters; some information in these articles may have already been published or compiled from other sources like Old House Web and about.com.