

Glossary of Terms

Alteration: Any change, addition or modification to any building or object, or any part of a building or object.

Baluster: One of a number of short vertical members (circular, square, tapered or turned) used to support a stair handrail.

Balustrade: An entire railing system (as along the edge of a balcony) including a top rail and its balusters and sometimes a bottom rail.

Banister: A handrail for a staircase.

Bay: The intervals between recurring elements on a façade, such as windows, columns or pilasters.

Bracket: Any overhanging member projecting from a wall or other body to support a weight (such as a cornice, eave, or bay window) acting outside the wall. Often, brackets are ornamental not functional.

Capital: The topmost member, usually decorated, of a column or pilaster.

Certificate of Appropriateness: A certificate issued by the Commission evidencing approval of specific plans for alteration of a structure or construction on a site in accordance with the Historic District overlay ordinance.

Column: A relatively long, slender structural member, usually vertical, supporting a load.

Compatible: Harmonious or orderly combination of elements with other elements in a structure.

Contributing: A classification applied to a site, structure or object within a historic district signifying that it contributes to the qualities that give the historic district cultural, historic, architectural or archeological significance. The structure individually is not a landmark or significant building. However, it does contribute to the overall historic context and significance of the district. Contributing structures retain their historic integrity.

Cornice: The exterior trim of a structure at the meeting of the roof and wall. An exterior cornice is usually comprised of a bed molding, soffit, fascia and crown molding. On the interior of a building, it refers to an ornamental molding running around the walls of a room just below the ceiling, also called crown molding.

Cupola: A small structure constructed on a roof. Typically with a circular, polygonal, or rectangular base. It is often used to provide light and/or ventilation.

Door Surround: An encircling border or decorative trim around the edge of a door opening.

Dormer: A structure projecting from a sloping roof usually housing a window or ventilating louver.

Double-hung window: A window with two vertically moving sash.

Elevation: The exterior face or side of a building. Also, a drawing that shows the vertical elements of a building.

Ell, el: A secondary wing or extension of a building at right angles to its principal dimension.

Entablature: In classical architecture, the horizontal members carried by columns, horizontally divided into three major parts: architrave (bottom), frieze (middle), and cornice (above).

Fanlight: A window, semi-circular in shape, over a door with muntins radiating out like a fan.

Fenestration: The arrangement and design of windows in a building.

Gable: The triangular area formed by the meeting of the two slopes of a pitched roof. Gable can be on the main façade or on the sides. The shape corresponds to pediment in classical architecture. (See Section VI. of the manual for illustrations of various roof forms.)

Half-timbering: Decorative wood trim that is applied to the exterior façade to suggest early timber frame construction. This was a popular motif for Queen Anne style houses. The term originates in the 16th and 17th century and describes timber frame construction where the structure's weight is carried by the frame not the wall.

Historic: In the context of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, the term "historic" generally refers to properties that are at least 50 years old, are representative of a specific architectural style, and retain sufficient detail and integrity of character.

Integrity: The authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period.

Lintel: Horizontal member of wood or stone over an opening (window, door) that supports the weight of the wall above. Sometimes also referred to as a header.

Local Significance: Importance of a property to the history of its community, such as a town or county.

Muntin: A secondary member (horizontal, vertical, or slanted) that supports and separates the individual panes of glass in a sash or door.

Noncontributing: Any structure that does not add to the qualities that give the historic district cultural, historic, architectural or archeological significance. The structure does not contribute to the overall historic context and significance of the district.

Palladian window: A window of large size, characteristic of neoclassic styles, divided by columns or piers resembling pilasters, into three sections. The middle section is usually wider than the others and is sometimes arched.

Pediment: In classical architecture, the triangular gable end of the roof above the horizontal cornice, often filled with sculpture. In later work, a surface used ornamentally over doors or windows; usually triangular but may be curved, or even broken.

Pediments are often used over doors as a decorative element.

Pilaster: A flattened or attached pier or pillar, often with capital and base. They are decorative features that imitate engaged piers but are not weight bearing. They are often rectangular or semi-circular and used to simulate a pillar or column at entrances, door openings, building corners, and fireplace mantels. Pilasters are often used to articulate the façade of a building.

Sash: Generally the framework of a window that moves, yet it can be fixed. A sash may slide in a vertical plane as in a double-hung window, or may be pivoted as in a casement window.

Setting: Quality of integrity applying to the physical environment of a historic property.

Sidelights: A fixed window which can be single pane or multi-pane that runs along either side of a doorway.

Streetscape: The combination of elements that define the area around a building or series of buildings, such as street, sidewalk, building, plantings, and lighting.

Structure: Anything constructed or erected, having a permanent or semi-permanent location on another structure or in the ground, including buildings, garages, billboards, signs, antennas, satellite sending or receiving dishes, carports, porches and other building features.

Transom: A horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window. The crossbar separating a door from the fanlight above it.

Transom light: A glazed light above the transom bar of a door.