

# Glossary

**Adaptive reuse** – The process of converting a building to a use other than that for which it was designed; for example, converting a factory into housing.

**Baluster** – A vertical member that supports the railing of a porch or the handrail of a staircase.

**Balustrade** – A railing or parapet consisting of a handrail on balusters, and sometimes including a bottom rail.

**Bargeboard** – A board, often decoratively carved or cut, that hangs perpendicularly from the projecting end of a roof gable. Sometimes called vergeboard or ‘gingerbread.’

**Bay** – One vertical unit of a building that consists of a series of similar units, commonly defined by the number of window or door openings per floor or by the space between columns or piers.

**Beltcourse** – A horizontal band across an elevation or around a building marking a division on the wall. Also known as a stringcourse.

**Beveled siding** – Tapered wood siding that overlaps for weather protection, applied horizontally on buildings of frame construction. Commonly called clapboard siding.

**Board and batten siding** – A wood siding consisting of vertical boards with narrow vertical strips (battens) placed over the joints.

**Bond** – The pattern in which masonry units are laid.

**Bracket** – A projecting member, often decorative, that appears to or does support an overhanging weight, such as a cornice.

**Bulkhead** – The area below the display windows in a commercial building.

**Capital** – The uppermost portion of a column or pilaster, often decorative.

**Casement window** – A window that swings outward on side hinges.

**CMU** – Concrete masonry unit.

**Column** – A supporting round post found on storefronts, porches and balconies – can be fluted or smooth.

**Corbel** – A bracket or projecting decorative element usually produced by extending successive courses of masonry beyond the wall surface.

**Cornerboard** – A board used to cover the exposed ends of wood siding to give a finished appearance and help make the building watertight.

**Cornice** – The projecting uppermost portion of a wall, sometimes treated in a decorative manner with brackets.

**Cupola** – A tower-like structure, often dome-shaped, that sits on the ridge of a roof.

**Demolition by neglect** – The destruction of a building or its elements through abandonment or lack of maintenance.

**Dentil** – Any of a series of small rectangular blocks projecting like teeth, as from under a cornice or frieze.

**Dormer** – A structural extension of a building’s roof, intended to provide light and headroom in a half-story; usually contains window(s) on its vertical face.

**Double-hung window** – A window with two operable sashes.

**Eaves** – The lower portion of the sloping surface of a roof, especially the part that overhangs a building’s walls.

**Façade** – The architectural ‘face’ of a building – usually refers to the front elevation.

**Fanlight** – A semicircular window with radiating muntins like the ribs of a fan; often placed over a door or window.

**Fascia** – A flat horizontal wooden member used as a facing at the ends of roof rafters and in the cornice area.

**Fenestration** – The arrangement of windows in a wall.

**Finial** – A carved, turned or sawn ornament made of metal, wood or stone that sits atop a gable, gatepost, or other peaked element.

**Flashing** – Material, often metal, used to waterproof roof valleys and around chimneys and other projections.

**Fluting** – Shallow, concave grooves running vertically on the shaft of a column, pilaster or other surface.

**Frieze** – A wooden member found just below the point where the wall surface meets the building’s cornice or roof overhang.

**Gable** – The triangular section of the end wall of a gabled roof.

**Gabled roof** – A roof that has one slope on opposite sides of the ridge, with a gable at either end.

**Galvanic action** – Chemical corrosion caused by the meeting of two dissimilar metals in a moist or wet environment.

**Gambrel roof** – A roof that has two slopes on opposite sides of a ridge.

**Glazing** – The transparent or semi-transparent glass or plastic in a window.

**Hipped roof** – A roof that is uniformly sloped on all four sides.

**Hood mould** – A large, projecting moulding over a window or door, originally designed to direct water away from the opening.

**Lintel** – A horizontal structural element at the top of a window or door; it carries the load of the wall above and may be of wood, stone or metal.

**Mansard roof** – A roof that has a double slope on all four sides, with the lower slope being quite steep or almost vertical.

**Modillion** – A horizontal bracket or scroll that appears at the building or porch cornice.

**Mullion** – A vertical piece that divides window sash, doors, or panels set close.

**Muntin** – The pieces that make up the small subdivisions in a multiple-pane glass window.

**Oriel window** – A projecting bay window that emerges above ground level.

**Parapet** – The portion of an exterior wall that rises above the roof, usually in the form of a low retaining wall.

**Pediment** – A wide, low-pitched gable surmounting the façade of a building in the classical style; also, any similar triangular element used over doors, windows or niches.

**Pilaster** – A flat pier that is attached to the wall surface and has little projection; the pier may have a base and cap, like a column, and may be smooth or fluted.

**Portico** – A porch supported by classical columns.

**Preservation** – The act or process of applying measures to maintain the form, integrity and materials of a building, structure or site in its existing condition.

**Prism glass** – Small panes of glass, usually set in a wood or metal framework in the transom over a storefront or entrance, specially cut to project some light into a space.

**Quoin** – Pieces of stone or raised brick used to emphasize the corner of a building.

**Rehabilitation** – The act or process of returning a building to a state of utility through repair or alteration that makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those features of the property significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values.

**Repointing** – To repair existing mortar joints with new mortar.

**Restoration** – The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period in time by means of removal of later work and/or the replacement of missing elements.

**Reveal** – The vertical side of a door or window opening between the frame and the wall surface.

**Sash** – The framework of a window actually supporting the glass. Sash may be fixed, sliding, hinged or pivoted.

**Scale** – The relationship of the size of a building or object to the size of a human.

**Segmental arch** – A type of circular arch that does not extend on the sides to make a full half circle; often found atop windows.

**Shed roof** – A gently pitched, almost flat, roof with only one slope.

**Sidelight** – A glass panel, usually of multiple panes, to either side of a door; often used in conjunction with a fanlight or transom.

**Sill** – The horizontal structural member below a window or door opening.

**Soffit** – The finished underside of an overhang, such as a roof.

**Spalling** – A condition of brick or stone concrete in which layers break off vertically and fall away, usually as a result of internal pressures caused by water infiltration.

**Stabilization** – The act or process of applying measures designed to re-establish a weather-resistant enclosure and the structural stability of an unsafe or deteriorated property while maintaining the essential form as it exists at present.

**Transom** – A glass panel, either fixed or operable, that is located over a window or door to provide additional natural light and/or ventilation to the interior of a building.

**Viewshed** – The entire area visible in all directions from a fixed point.

**Water table** – A projecting ledge, moulding or stringcourse along the side of a building, designed to shed water.

*Adapted from glossaries included in the Design Guidelines for German Village, Ohio and Lafayette, Indiana.*

