

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.

