



PHOTOGRAPHING WINDOWS

Boston Landmarks Commission applications are often rejected because of poor quality or missing photographs. Submitting quality photographs takes a little practice and a steady hand but can ultimately hasten the landmarks application process and support a desirable outcome. This guide should help applicants take photos that will support your application narrative. These rules are not exclusive to windows but can help document doors, fences and any other element regulated in a historic district. Refer to your [district guidelines](#) for more information.*

*The Landmarks Commission requires all original windows to be maintained or restored whenever possible. Multiple recommendation letters from window restoration specialists documenting that the historic windows cannot be restored may also be required to support replacement requests.



Landmarks Commission

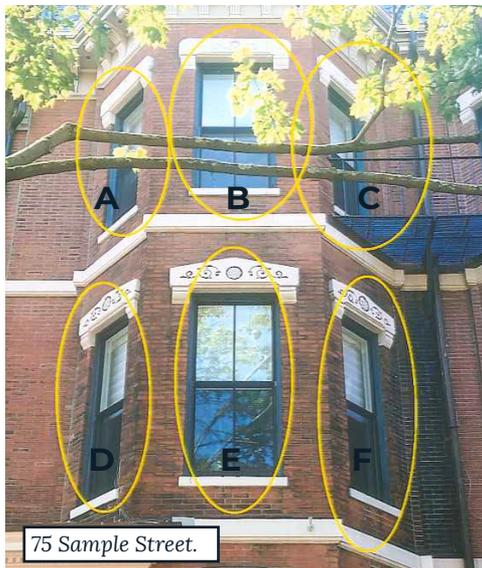
CITY of **BOSTON**

PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEYS

The Landmarks Commission requires all original windows to be maintained or restored. Windows already replaced or damaged beyond repair should use this guide to document their condition.

The Landmarks Commission encourages multiple pictures from different angles but often times it is hard for Commission staff to understand what photograph corresponds to which window. To resolve this issue, it is helpful to label your windows so that you can refer to them in separate, close-up photographs.

Be sure to write the address of the property on the front or the back of the photograph. The Commission receives many applications and photographs and its easy for the pictures to get misplaced. Google map screen shots are acceptable for project scope photographs, but must be supplemented with photographs taken by the applicant.



GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHY TECHNIQUES

When documenting windows for your application, details matter. The more evidence you provide to support your proposal the easier it will be to approve. Here are some components to consider:

Color Photography – Color photography shows more detail than black and white. This is especially true when showing conditions of deteriorated windows.

Digital (Prints) or Traditional Photographs – Either are acceptable. When printing at home avoid printing with low toner which can lessen the picture quality.



Left: An example of a window survey that can be used to reference other close-up photographs such as the one seen above.

INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographing windows from the interior from different angles and perspectives helps your application.

Start With the Whole Window

Photographing the entire window from the inside helps set the narrative. Be sure to label the window photographs as described at the beginning of this article with corresponding letters/numbers.

Document all Applicable Components of The Window

When photographing all necessary components zoom in and photograph all relevant areas of the window. Use the info graphic below for identifying each component.

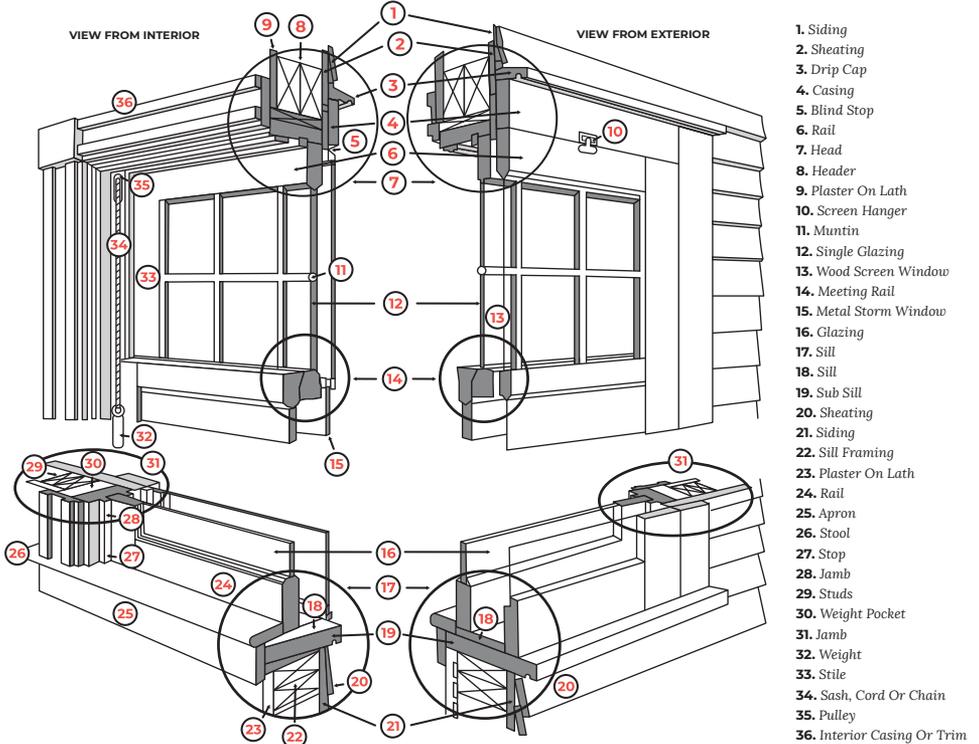
Parts to Photograph When Showing Deterioration

Photograph these elements to support a case for window replacement/repair.

- Jamb liners
- Wood joints on the bottom of the rail of the window
- Muntin bars
- Gaskets (if newer/multi-layered glass)
- Weights and pulley and corresponding pocket
- Brick mold (molding around the window).

This is often historic and contributes to the character of the structure.

DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOW COMPONENTS



NOTE: Each historic district and individual landmark have different policies related to acceptable window style and configuration. Refer to your [district's guidelines](#) for more information.

Documenting Damage - When showing damage to a window, you will want to document the conditions, including but not limited to:

- Mold
- Rust
- Termite damage
- Wood rot
- Broken panes
- Missing/broken pulley systems
- Broken joints
- Mobility (if the window can open and close with ease).
- Broken/missing/decaying seals

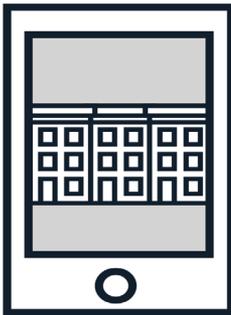
EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographing the outside of windows is tricky. Windows on upper floors can be especially challenging. The applicant should photograph the exterior similar to the way you document interior photographs. If the windows are not on floors 1-2, try photographing elements from the inside of the structure. Additionally, pay attention to these details:

Focus - Pictures are not helpful if they are not clear and crisp. If you are using an iPhone/smartphone to document your windows tap the screen to focus the picture.

Time of Day For Optimal Quality - Take photos at mid-day to reduce the amount of shadows with the light source (sun) behind you.

Time of Year - Autumn or Spring are the best times of the year to take photographs when leaves and shade are minimal.



PORTRAIT MODE



LANDSCAPE MODE

TIP: When using your smartphone to take photographs you can easily switch from portrait to landscape mode in order to fit your subject better. Simply turn your phone in the direction seen above.

COMMON PROBLEMS WITH PHOTOGRAPHS



No evidence there is anything wrong with this window.



Which window is being replaced?



*No point of reference or label.
Which window is this?*



*Too dark, curtains hide window details,
too blurry.*

COMMON PROBLEMS WITH PHOTOGRAPHS



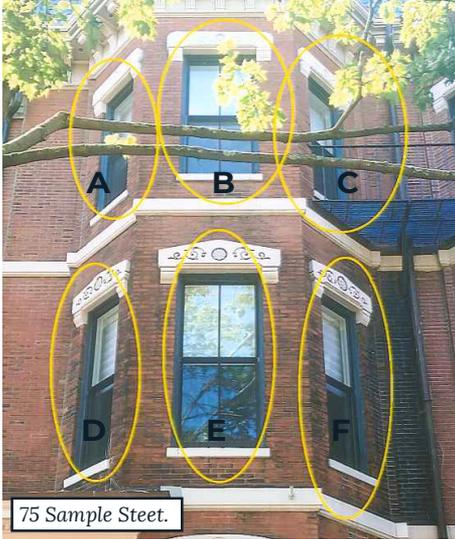
Good clarity and lighting. Needs reference to where on the facade the window is located.



Too dark, blurry and taken from Google Street view.

HOW TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS

These photographs would not be sufficient alone, but together they can create a comprehensive application package.



Step 1: Start with a survey of all the windows in the proposed application. Be sure to label all of the windows as they are above.



Step 2: Start with a clear overall interior photograph of the window.



Step 3: Photograph the overall Exterior of the window.



Step 4: Photograph all damaged elements of the window.