



Preservation Trust of Vermont



Dear Historic Property Owner,

Given the concerns about rising energy costs, we want to share with you a tip sheet that was just produced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation on *Historic Wood Windows* and two guides for reducing energy use in homes and buildings available from Efficiency Vermont: *A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Energy Star Home Sealing*, and *The Energy Smart Home*.

If you have wooden windows in your home that are 50 years or older, you will find the NTHP Tip Sheet, *Historic Wood Windows*, useful in evaluating and maximizing their energy cost savings. Window replacement is not a particularly “green” option for energy retrofit and, despite the substantial increase in fuel prices over the last 2 years, there are other areas of buildings that offer much better return for the money you invest. According to Efficiency Vermont's *The Energy-Smart Home* booklet, “It’s generally not cost-effective to replace old windows for energy-saving purposes alone, because the high cost of new windows is rarely paid back by energy savings.” (pg 5). Even with heating oil at \$4/gallon, the payback at best is in the vicinity of 25-30 years or longer. Knowledgeably performed air sealing and insulation measures offer greater savings than window replacement.

Colleagues from the Preservation Trust, the Division for Historic Preservation, and Jeremiah Parker Restoration have been working collaboratively with Efficiency Vermont to better understand energy efficiency in relation to historic buildings. We’re in full agreement on where to start to realize energy savings and improved building performance, including:

- addressing moisture problems
- installing efficient furnaces, appliances and light bulbs
- effectively sealing air leaks with an awareness of combustion safety
- effectively insulating attics and foundations
- weatherizing historic windows and installing high quality storm windows
- insulating walls: Because of the potential serious moisture damage risk to historic structures, consider wall insulation after evaluating the other improvements, taking into account construction type, expected costs and savings, materials and existing or potential moisture problems. Make sure that you or a potential contractor has a professional understanding of both interior moisture and exterior water management strategies to manage any risk to the building.

The work described in the bullets above will realize a substantial return on investment for any building. As with any weatherization improvements, an understanding of existing and potential moisture issues or effects on combustion appliances is very important.

The Energy-Smart Home booklet is a good source for guidance, and can be viewed or downloaded from the Efficiency Vermont website at:

<http://www.efficiencyvermont.com/stella/filelib/2007FinalEnergySmartBooklet.pdf>

A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Energy Star Home Sealing can be viewed or downloaded from Efficiency Vermont at:

<http://www.efficiencyvermont.com/stella/filelib/DIYHome%20Sealing%20brochure.pdf>

The National Trust for Historic Preservation *Historic Wood Window* Tip Sheet can be viewed or downloaded at:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/additional-resources/July2008WindowsTipSheet.pdf>

We will continue to do research and to share latest findings with you, but for now...save those historic windows!

We encourage you to be in touch if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Efficiency Vermont
Preservation Trust of Vermont
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation