

Eureka California Victorian Homes: Window Restoration Class

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If you own a Eureka California Victorian home, then you know keeping your home maintained or fixing something in it, is a labor of love; especially working on your windows. Windows are the eyes of your home. If you drive by any Victorian in Eureka and compare the ones with old historic windows to the new vinyl ones, which one appeals the most to you? For me, hands down, it's the old window look. It has that craftsmanship that a new vinyl window just can't give you.

So, even if you are not into learning how to repair or renovate your charming old single pane windows in your old home, sometimes it's good to get an overview so you have a general understanding about the process before hiring an expert or just getting plain frustrated and replacing those "old worn out windows" with vinyl dual pane. Because there is nothing like the look of an old wood window. Not even a similar vinyl copy can truly replace the charm and character of its original.



I had an opportunity last Saturday to sit through a window restoration workshop, hosted by my friend Bill Hole, who heads up the Preservation and Restoration program at Humboldt County California's College of the Redwoods (CR).

I learned an incredible amount during the six-hour workshop. Currently the CR Restoration and Preservation students are restoring one of our prized Eureka historic homes; a Queen Anne on F Street right in the heart of Eureka, CA named The Annie B. House. I have to admit, once you understand the brilliance in the old window design, especially since the old window has done its job for over 115 years, you might think twice about removing them.

The fascinating thing about these windows is that they were made and assembled in a factory during the Industrial Revolution. Think about it, each piece on your window was duplicated hundreds of times on a factory line, assembled at the factory and shipped to the building site. The whole window, including its casing was then installed into the home. Even all those fancy decorative pieces you see on the exterior of many older homes, also manufactured.



Each piece on an older window fit together perfectly. If you'll look closely you will not find any nails used to keep all those parts together. They all fit together snugly. And at least in Humboldt County, CA, because most windows were made with old growth Redwood, many of them are still in good shape, even after 100 years of being in your house. They just need a little TLC. A little maintenance goes a long way and can sometimes be remarkably cheaper than spending \$\$\$ to replace a window; parts and labor included. You just need to find someone who has experience working on older windows or do it yourself.

Older windows if restored to its working condition will actually keep drafts out. The drafts you feel in your house are the result of windows that need a little tweaking to seal out the cold. Another reason your windows may not work properly is because several coats of paint have been applied to each window part over the years. Certain parts need to be free of paint in order for them to move properly.



There are many things you can do to bring your old windows back to life:

Old hardware covered in paint can be brought back to life with a little TSP Substitute (Tri-Sodium Phosphate) soaking and good cleaning using a metal brush wheel.



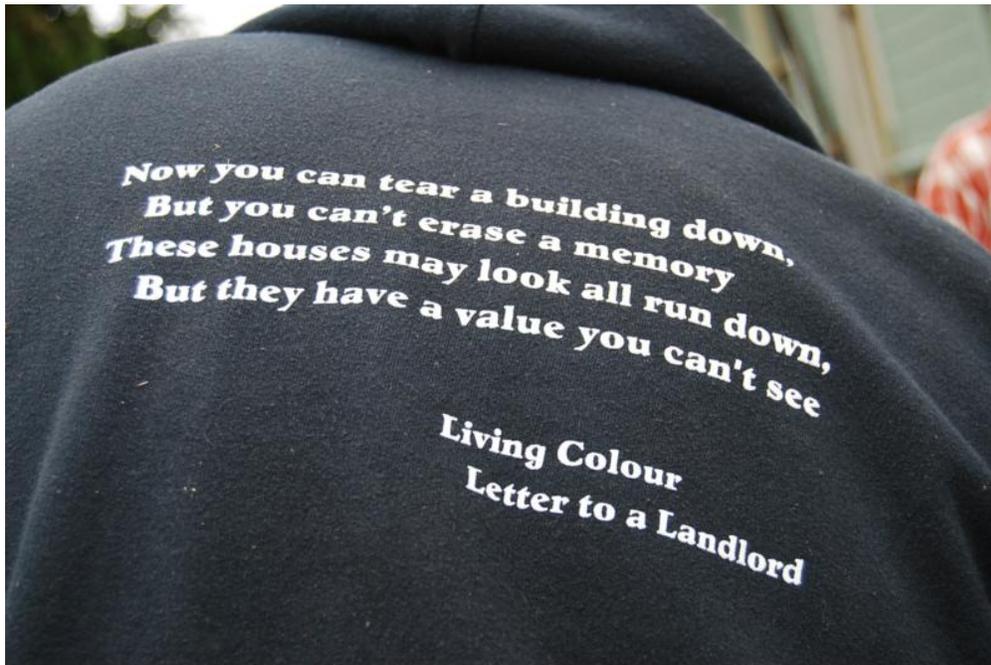
Need to replace a sash cord that holds the window weight? You don't have to pry off the window casing trim to get to the pulley/weight system. All you have to do is pull off a small piece on the side of the interior window.





And a final tip from the experts: When starting to free up painted parts off a window of one of your Eureka California Victorian homes, try using an army knife to cut through the paint before you start removing any pieces. Then slowly and patiently start prying parts away using a small prying tool.

So if nothing else, I gained an incredible appreciation for the ingenuity that went into the old window design and I am more than happy to slowly repair each and every one of my old windows in my Eureka historic home so they last another 115 years for all to appreciate and enjoy.



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