

Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

Restoring and Maintaining Double Hung Wood Windows – Part 1

By Monty Smith

This article started out to be a general treatise on wood windows, but there are so many types that it was quickly narrowed to the most common type that we face in our older homes – double hung windows. In case you're not familiar with this type, these are the vertical sliding windows, often supported with ropes and pulleys (see diagram).

Attribution and recommendation should come first. Although much of this article is drawn from experience, many details are from Terence Meany's book, *Working Windows*. This small and inexpensive book covers far more details than I can cover in two articles and is recommended for anyone owning an older home. The book costs \$12-15 from Amazon, Powell's or similar, and the Forest Grove Library has just ordered it and should be available by spring. Amazon has excerpts from the book including many pictures that label the various parts of double hung windows – the attached picture is from the book.

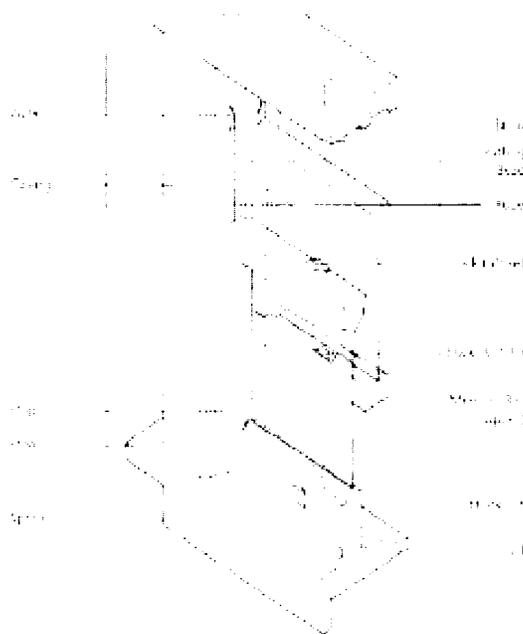
Typical problems

Many types of problems occur with double hung windows, the most common of which will be discussed below. These include:

- Painted shut
- Weights not working
- Paint and putty deteriorated
- HW broken or missing
- Glass is cracked
- Not weather tight
- Wood rotted or damaged

Opening Windows That Have Been Painted Shut

For an intact window, being painted shut is the most common problem, and often the easiest to fix. Before resorting to a putty knife and a hammer to break the seal of paint, I'll start with a sharp utility knife. Often the paint isn't very deep, and a cutting with a sharp blade can do less damage than pounding in a putty



knife. Go around all four sides of the window, both inside and out. Go easy with the sharp knife – strong pressure often leads to slipping and gouging a slice out of the wood.

Be careful when trying to open it – don't pull on the top rail above the glass. I've pulled stubborn windows apart that way. Instead, use something flat and wide to pry it open from the bottom, applying pressure between the sash and windowsill. A stiff, wide, putty knife often works well. Don't use a screwdriver – there's not enough surface area and you'll gouge the wood once you start prying. You may need to provide some lubrication inside the jamb to help get things moving.

If the window's still firmly in place then I've found it's easier to remove the trim holding the window in place (the stop) than to keep prying and eventually damaging the window. Repeat the previous paint-cutting steps on the stop. First try gently cutting the

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A Tale of a Historic Barn in Oregon

By Scott Rogers

I have always loved barns. My folks had barns, most of them relics from the turn of the century, and most in miserable shape. The buildings are still in use today (in one form or another), although the only thing keeping them standing is the fact that the wind just passes right through the siding.

There's a massive barn on my father-in-law's ranch in eastern Oregon _ towering 6 stories above the countryside. The magnificent red barn is featured in the Oregon Tourism brochure and has been used for everything from storing grain, hay and equipment to housing livestock and farm cats. It is truly a feat of architectural engineering.

These examples share a common trait with barns and outbuildings throughout the state: it is often more expensive to repair and maintain a historic barn than it is to simply tear it down and build a new, and perhaps more functional structure.

The barn at my in-law's ranch, while still in great structural shape, is in dire need of a new roof as well as a fresh coat of paint. The eastern Oregon sun and wind has taken its toll over the years. Repairs are not small projects on a barn of this size, and while the labor and materials are daunting enough, the cost for both is staggering. To remove the existing cedar shake and install new ones on a barn of this size could cover the

expense of a brand new shop. Throw in the painting and you are now looking at depleting most of the annual profit. Can a farm afford to pay for these expensive and perhaps "non-essential" projects, regardless of whether or not a barn needs the work? No. Are there programs in place to provide funding? Well, kind of.

I was determined to find a way to restore this barn in an economical manner. After all, it is a quickly disappearing piece of our history, and perhaps there is a way to find some assistance with funding. I contacted several organizations when researching funding for the barn, from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Salem, to the people at "Barn Again!" in Colorado, and ran into the same dead end. Funding exists in the form of tax credits, and that requires the entire ranch, not just the barn, be listed on the Historic Register. While a tax credit is certainly beneficial, when you are looking at a \$50,000 roofing job, the cost is still too immense to justify for a small privately owned farm.

If you or someone you know has a historic barn or outbuilding in need of repair, I strongly encourage you to pursue funding. Regardless of the outcome, if the State Historic Preservation Office receives enough interest in such matters, perhaps we will see a new program created to assist in maintaining and preserving what was once a staple of the countryside.

The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office may be reached by phone at (503) 378-4168, or through their website: <http://shpo.prd.state.or.us/index.php>

The _Barn Again!_ Program may be reached by phone at (303) 623-1504, or through their

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Clark Historic District Update

On October 29th the state historic review board voted to send our proposed Clark Historic District on to the Federal Government with a recommendation to make it a National Historic District.

Currently we are still waiting for news of our pending application. Watch the local papers - when this gets approved - we'll make sure you know about it.

SKUNKED

By *Katya Duncan*

When we moved into our partially renovated Victorian house we soon found out we were not alone. Indeed, we had an active family of skunks living in the crawl space under the old fireplace. Let me tell you we did everything to try and make them leave and they showed us what they thought of our presence.

We tried all the old wives tale methods to rid ourselves of these pest; the moth balls didn't work, loud heavy metal music only drove us crazy and we never did find out where we might have gotten hold of some fox urine.

Unfortunately, the only method that worked was the hard one. Skunks come out at night and so each evening my husband set a humane cage trap baited with cat food. In the morning we usually found a skunk, sometimes a cat that we released none the worse for wear. The skunks we took about twenty miles out of town and released it into the countryside. (We needed to go that far to keep the skunks from returning).

To stop them getting back under the house we had to seal the perimeter of the porch, my husband built a one way door system so any skunks left under the house could get out but not reenter. Since then we have had no skunk problems.

Skunks do not hibernate in winter. On the contrary, they mate in January-February and are very active at night as long as temperatures are favorable. Young skunks are born around April to May and begin to emerge from the den around mid-June. Up to thirteen may be in a litter.

Skunks usually rest under a building or crawl space, or under a shed or deck. They will occasionally wander into your garage if the door is left open. They do get rabies, distemper, and can have parasites and diseases, so they may cause problems for you own pets. They can also dig under structures to live, or they may move into an existing woodchuck hole. Unfortunately, in suburbia, their numbers can get very large in a small area. Skunk problems become commonplace in certain neighborhoods.

In the most common situation you find one, two or a family of skunks living under a building, and the odor has become intolerable. In these situations remove the skunks that are living there with cage traps, and close up the entrances. You can seal the perimeter by trenching around the perimeter, along with the use of a heavy screen to prevent others from digging under the same building. Make sure your perimeter is sealed or you will be living your skunk problem again.

Critter Gitter in Portland helped us with advice and rented traps. And will also professionally remove the skunks if it's all too much for you.

Restoring Wood Windows Continued . . .

If the window's still firmly in place then I've found it's easier to remove the trim holding the window in place (the stop) than to keep prying and eventually damaging the window. Repeat the previous paint-cutting steps on the stop. First try gently cutting the paint, then tap a putty knife in behind the stop and pry outward. They're usually held in place with small finishing nails so aren't too hard to pry off. Once the stops are removed you can pull the entire window out. Be very careful when pulling on the window so that you don't crack the glass, and likewise exercise caution with the rope to make sure you don't break it. This removes the bottom window. If necessary, repeat for the top, even removing the vertical guide on the jamb that separates the top and bottom windows (the parting bead). Careful with this parting bead, though. It appears to be nailed on the outside but it's actually set in a groove and can't just be pried off. Often the lead breaks while trying to get it out. Don't worry – we've all broken these and they're easily replaced by a similar size at the lumber store. If you've done all this and the window still isn't budging, look for nails or screws keeping it shut. One more caution on loosening

the top window. If the ropes are broken, sometimes it will come crashing down with gravity once it's broken free. This can wreak havoc on glass, or even fingers! For large windows, consider nailing a block to the jamb to stop its fall – just in case.

Whether the window's now sliding or completely out, clean up the years of excess paint and lubricate the jamb (I still use paraffin wax). The rail surface and the jamb can be sanded to remove the excess paint, but please be aware some of the paint may be lead-based, so make sure to take proper precautions against lead.

Next article we'll talk about replacing ropes and pulleys, broken glass (actually how to deal with decrepit glazing), broken sashes, missing or broken hardware, weatherstripping and refinishing windows.

You can also reference these websites for some more information:
http://www.oldhouseweb.net/stories/How-To/Windows/Historic_Wood_Windows/
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/thisoldhouse/knowhow/restoration/windows/index.html>

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Preserving Forest Grove is a quarterly newsletter published by the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board to help fulfill its duty of public education regarding the preservation of cultural resources. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please call James Reitz at 992-3233.

The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board Grant Program . . . is your house on our local register? If it is did you know that your house is eligible for restoration/rehabilitation grant funding? The Historic Landmarks Board has funds to give your house. If you are planning any exterior restoration work such as painting, restoring a porch or replacing a roof OR if you have structural work to do such a foundation repair. We'd love to help. We fund projects at 50% of the value of the job up to a limit of \$1,000 per grant. Come see us! We can also help you find historically appropriate solutions to any problems you may have.

Oregon Open Houses for March

Do you like to tour older homes?

Oregon's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has announced March 2002 open house dates for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places that receive property tax relief under the state's special assessment program.

The monthly open house list is distributed through SHPO and certain participating chambers of commerce, historical societies, assessor's offices and local landmarks offices.

Under the special assessment program, a property's assessed value is frozen for 15 years for purposes of local property taxes. Owners of commercial properties may reapply for an additional 15 years.

In return for the special assessment benefit, owners are required to hold an annual open house for the public.

The open house must be held at least one day a year for a minimum of four consecutive hours, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Owners may choose any day of the year except state observed national holidays.

To obtain further information on this program contact SHPO, 1115 Commercial St. NE, Suite 2, Salem, OR 97301-1012; telephone: 503-378-4168, ext 227.

To view the list go to:

<http://www.shpo.state.or.us/news.php?id=235>

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