

The Hollywood
Star NEWS

HOME & Garden

Restoring old windows is “green” solution

By Star staff

If you live in an older home, chances are the original, wooden double-hung windows are in need of repair. Maybe they leak or fail to stay open or closed. Or maybe they're painted shut. Whatever the problem, before replacing those windows, you might consider having them restored.

Restoring an old wooden window rather than replacing it can be a “green” alternative because it means not having to use additional raw materials, not having to manufacture and transport a new window and not having to dispose of an old one.

Besides, those original windows add a lot character to your home. Why give that up?

Patty Spencer, owner of Fresh Air Sash Cord Repair, has spent the past 11 years making old windows work again. Unless

they are severely damaged or deteriorated, Spencer said, there is no reason not to repair them. Older wooden windows, she said, “are most often built out of old-growth Douglas Fir or cedar, both trees native to Oregon. The wood is tight-grained, insect- and weather-resistant and, quite frankly, has stood the test of time.”

Although Spencer, who worked as a consulting engineer for five years before starting her business, admits it's unusual for a woman to be in her line of work, she's always enjoyed working with her hands. After repairing all the windows in her 1923 home, she “realized what a treat it was to have properly functioning windows!” Voila. Fresh Air Sash Cord Repair was born.

Restoring an old window includes several steps: First, the moldings and sash are removed. Then any built-up paint is scraped

off before the parts are cleaned and lubricated and any needed weather stripping added. After that, the weights are properly sized, the sash are restrung with new cord and the whole thing is reassembled.

“I really love it when I'm all finished and my client gets to try the windows for the first time,” Spencer said. “Their reaction is consistently something like “Wow! This is incredible – they actually work!”

Restoring old windows sometimes means dealing with lead-based paint. According to Spencer, starting April 22, 2010, all businesses that disturb lead-based paint as part of their work in pre-1978 homes, schools, and other buildings must be EPA-certified and the employees must be trained to use lead-safe work practices. Spencer took the required 8-hour training class last fall and is now a certified renovator. Fresh Air Sash Cord Repair, Inc. became a certified firm in January 2010, and Spencer has trained her employee to use lead-safe work practices.

For more information: Fresh Air Sash Cord Repair, freshairsash.com, info@freshairsash.com, (503) 284-7693.



Patty Spencer, owner of Fresh Air Sash Cord Repair, restores an old window.
— Courtesy Fresh Air Sash Cord Repair

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