

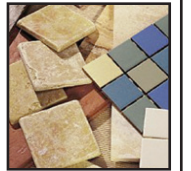
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Home Improvement
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Old Windows Can Be Fixed To Feel New, Look Classic

By **Scott Goldfarb and Ed Sanchez**

Long Beach is full of beautiful old, and not-so-old, buildings kept up to maintain their original charm, and with owners facing a similar dilemma. After 30, 50 or 100 years of service, some of their windows don't open, or close or lock.

Not knowing of many options, some replace their charming wood or steel frame windows with new, expensive, vinyl ones. Vinyl unfortunately, often lacks charm and can also be problematic in the long run.

New vinyl windows have small, not so visible plastic injection molded parts, which are used to assemble the window and let it tilt in. These small parts start breaking when they're between 10 and 20 years old and the owner can then have to deal with a company that has gone out of business.

A new option opened up recently. It is now possible, whether your home is new or old, to have your wood windows or steel frames restored. Your windows' functionality can also be updated by using the same

state-of-the-art weather stripping used on vinyl windows.

Window restoration includes working on things that are 60 to 70 years old for which nobody's made parts for 50 years. It may include machining and producing these parts. By the end of the repair, older frames can be made to work as well or better than even a century ago when they were brand new.

Not many companies offer this service because it requires workmen to think like a mechanic, a carpenter and an inventor. However, if

you deal with specialists, you can have just about any window repaired. In fact, if your windows date back to about 1910-1930, and have counterweights, once repaired, you'll be able to open your window with one hand, and will only need to change the rope every 30-50 years.

Your old windows are also practical. If your windows were built before about 1946, the window sills and jams are likely made from old redwood, which repels termites and mold. Sashes back then were often made of

Douglas fir that had been dipped in a borate solution to repel bugs and mold. New wood windows are not made that way.

If your windows are properly repaired, wood double hung (up and down) windows can be fixed to need no repairs for about 40-50 years and steel casement replacements can last for about a century. So it's clear that home owners of newer or older windows have options now when frustrated by "stuck" windows.

Scott Goldfarb and Ed Sanchez own Window Restoration and Repair in Los Alamitos.