



CHICAGO BUNGALOW ASSOCIATION

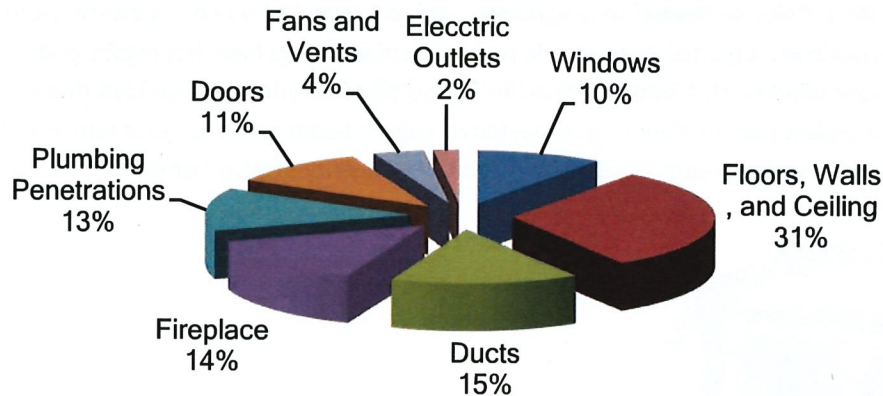
Window Myths

Are you lucky enough to have your bungalow's original wood windows? Are you sick of window salespeople knocking on your door trying to convince you to replace for the sake of energy efficiency? Here are seven myth-busting facts why the windows you already have are better, stronger, greener and more beautiful than anything they can sell you!

- 1) **MYTH:** Your old windows are where the bulk of your energy loss occurs and are causing your high utility bills.
FACT: On average, only 10% of air leaks enter through windows! **ONLY 10%**! (Heat rises up, after all.)

Insulating and air sealing your attic is the best way to minimize energy loss because that is where you lose the majority of your heat! Don't believe us, check out this graph:

Causes of air leaks in homes
(http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/m/air_leaks.html)



- 2) **MYTH:** New windows are greener and more energy efficient than old windows.
FACT: The greenest window is the one you already have! A properly maintained historic wood window with a storm window has the **SAME** energy efficiency as a new window.

Your windows are full of embodied energy, which is the energy already used to cut down the trees, mill the wood, manufacture the glass, transport the materials to your lot, hand craft the frames and maintain them for almost 100 years! The high quality old growth wood from which they are made doesn't even exist anymore.

Replacement windows require using the same energy and more (because your current windows have to be hauled to the landfill) to produce them. Furthermore, PVC production for vinyl windows is toxic for the environment, cannot be reused and does not break down in landfills.

Repairing your windows may only require removing paint, replacing missing hardware, or adding weather stripping. A properly maintained historic wood window with a storm window has the SAME energy efficiency as a new window without using all the energy and resources to make new ones. Furthermore, it can easily take 100 years for you to be able to save enough on your energy bills to recoup the expense of replacing your windows, and by that time, you'll be on your third set of "energy saving" windows! Remember that only 10% of air leaks are from your windows.

3) MYTH: To save energy, you need low-e glass and insulated glass panes.

FACT: Glass is not a good insulator, no matter how it is engineered. It's not wise to spend money on glass, because that's not where you will find savings. Address areas where you get the most bang for your buck first: attic insulation and plumbing penetrations. Then, move down the air leak pie chart.

4) MYTH: Colonial Style windows will look great on your house because it's old.

FACT: Your bungalow is NOT a Colonial Revival style home; with very few exceptions, Historic Chicago Bungalows are Arts and Crafts style homes with unique window styles!

The window pattern, called lites, is important to the look, feel and authenticity of your home. Many bungalows have 3 lites over 1 lite, but many, many, many more patterns were used to dazzling effect. Colonial Revival style windows, with a 6 over 6 or 9 over 9 pattern, were not used in bungalows. Colonial Revival style replacement windows have flat plastic grids on the inside of your window that simulate muntins (wood piece on your window sash that supports the separate glass panes). Your original windows were custom made for your house and have raised muntins, which create shadows and add to the beauty of your home.



5) MYTH: New windows are maintenance free.

FACT: New windows are maintenance free in that they cannot be maintained, only replaced altogether, if a part breaks.

Ask a neighbor with replacement windows how long it took for one of their windows to start having problems and if they had to have it replaced. Original windows are made of multiple parts and pieces and can be repaired with tools you can find at your local hardware store. With a little maintenance today, your windows can last for another 100 years.

6) MYTH: Your old windows are beyond repair.

FACT: Apart from an altogether missing window, there are no problems that can't be repaired with the right know-how.

Rotted pieces can be repaired with epoxy, pullies/weights can be replaced, paint can be removed and warped frames can be straightened. Moreover, when you repair and restore your windows, you support the local economy because you employ local craftspeople to do the work. Take a look at our [Window Fix-it Guide](#) to see what problems you can tackle yourself!

7) MYTH: Window repair is too expensive.

FACT: *Cheap* replacement windows are less expensive than quality window restoration/repair, but you are getting an inferior product.

Any replacement window that could come close to your original window in quality will be as much or more than the cost to restore the same window. We recommend identifying the most damaged and/or most used windows and fixing those now. The rest can wait until you can afford restoration. For a comprehensive list of local window repair specialists categorized by skill sets, please refer to the [Handypeople Local Resource List](#).

Check out this month's Old House Journal for a detailed guide to [window repair](#) and [energy-saving tips for historic home owners!](#)