

Glossary of Architectural Terminology

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<http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/glossary/glossary.shtml>

architrave 1. The lowest part of a classical entablature.
2. A molding enframing an opening such as a window.

areaway The open space between a rowhouse and the sidewalk, usually beside the stoop.

awning A projecting shading device, usually of canvas, mounted on the outside of a door or window.

baluster One of a series of short vertical posts, often ornamental, used to support a rail.

balustrade A railing composed of balusters and a top rail running along the edge of a porch, balcony, roof, or stoop.

*******bay* A regularly repeating division of a facade, marked by fenestration.

bay window A projecting form containing windows that rises from the ground or from some other support, such as a porch roof; see also oriel.

*******bracket* A projecting angled or curved form used as a support, found in conjunction with balconies, lintels, pediments, cornices, etc.

brick molding A milled wood trim piece covering the gap between the window frame and masonry, which can be rectilinear, curved or composite-curved.

cap flashing A waterproof sheet that seals the tops of cornices and walls.

capital The topmost member, usually decorated, of a column or pilaster.

casement A window sash that is hinged on the side.

cast iron A type of iron, mass-produced in the nineteenth century, created by pouring molten iron into a mold; used for ornament, garden furniture, and building parts.

clapboard Wood siding composed of horizontal, overlapping boards, the lower edges of which are usually thicker than the upper.

colonnade A row of regularly spaced columns supporting an entablature.

colonnette A diminutive column which is usually either short or slender.

column A vertical cylindrical support. In classical design it is composed of a base (except in the Greek Doric order), a long, gradually tapered shaft, and a capital.

console A scroll-shaped projecting bracket that supports a horizontal member.

coping A protective cap, top or cover of a wall parapet, commonly sloping to protect masonry from water.

corbel An architectural member which projects upward and outward from a wall that supports a horizontal member.

*******cornice* A projecting molding that tops the elements to which it is attached; used especially for a roof or the crowning member of an entablature, located above the frieze.

cresting A decorative element, frequently of iron, usually located at the peak or edge of a roof.

crocket An ornamental foliate form placed at regularly spaced intervals on the slopes and edges of the spires, pinnacles, gables, and similar elements of Gothic buildings.

cupola A small dome on a base crowning a roof.

*******dentil* A small, square, toothlike block in a series beneath a cornice.

Doric One of five classical orders, recognizable by its simple capital. The Greek Doric column has a fluted shaft and no base; the Roman Doric column may be fluted or smooth and rests on a molded base.

*******dormer* A vertical structure, usually housing a window, that projects from a sloping roof and is covered by a separate roof structure.

double-hung A type of window with two sash, each sliding on a vertical track.

drip molding A projecting molding around the head of a door or window frame, often extended horizontally at right angles to the sides of the frame, intended to channel rain away from the opening; also called a drip lintel.

eave The overhanging edge of a roof.

*******egg and dart* An ornamental band molding of egg forms alternating with dart forms.

elevation An exterior face of a building; also, a drawing thereof.

enframement A general term referring to any elements surrounding a window or door.

English bond A pattern of brickwork with alternate courses of headers and stretchers.

entablature In classical architecture, a major horizontal member carried by a column(s) or pilaster(s); it consists of an architrave, a frieze, and a cornice. The proportions and detailing are different for each order, and strictly prescribed.

eyebrow dormer A curved dormer with no sides, covered by a smooth protrusion from the sloping roof.

*******facade* The main exterior face of a building, sometimes distinguished from the other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

fanlight A semicircular or semielliptical window above a door, usually inset with radiating glazing bars.

fascia A horizontal, flat element, often combined with a cornice and architrave.

*******fenestration* The organization and design of windows in a building.

festoon A carved ornament in the form of a band, loop, or wreath, suspended from two points; also called a "garland" or a "swag."

finial The crowning ornament of a pointed element, such as a spire.

flashing Strips of sheet metal bent to fit the angle between any two roof surfaces or between the roof and any projection, such as a chimney.

Flemish bond A pattern of brickwork in which each course consists of headers and stretchers laid alternately; each header is centered between the stretcher above and the stretcher below it.

foliate Decorative leafage, often applied to capitals or moldings.

French door, window A tall casement window that reaches to the floor, usually arranged in two leaves as a double door.

frieze 1. The middle horizontal member of a classical entablature, above the architrave and below the cornice. 2. A similar decorative band in a stringcourse, or near the top of an interior wall below the cornice.

gable The upper portion of an end wall formed by the slope of a roof.

galvanized iron Iron that has been coated with zinc to inhibit rusting.

glazing bar See mullion.

Gothic sash A window sash pattern composed of mullions that cross to form pointed arches.

grille A decorative, openwork grating, usually of iron, used to protect a window, door, or other opening.

gutter A shallow channel of metal or wood set immediately below and along the eaves of a building to catch and carry off rainwater.

header A masonry wall unit of brick which is laid so that its short end is exposed.

hood A projection that shelters an element such as a door or window.

Ionic One of the five classical orders, characterized by capitals with spiral elements called "volutes," a fasciated entablature, continuous frieze, dentils in its cornice, and by its elegant detailing.

jigsaw carving Wooden ornament cut with a thin narrow saw blade.

joist One of a series of parallel timber beams used to support floor and ceiling loads, and supported in turn by larger beams, girders, or bearing walls; the widest dimension is vertically oriented.

key A block, often used in a series, which projects beyond the edge of the enframing of an opening and is joined with the surrounding masonry. A block handled in such a manner is keyed to the masonry; see quoin.

keystone The central wedge-shaped member of a masonry arch; also used as a decorative element on arches in wood structures.

latticework Thin strips of wood arranged in a netlike grid pattern, often set diagonally.

leaded window A window composed of small panes, usually diamond-shaped or rectangular, held in place by narrow strips of cast lead.

leader A horizontal or vertical cylinder, usually made of metal, which carries water from the gutter to the ground.

*******lintel* A horizontal structural element over an opening which carries the weight of the wall above it.

loggia 1. An arcaded or colonnaded structure, open on one or more sides, sometimes with an upper story. 2. An arcaded or colonnaded porch or gallery attached to a larger structure.

lunette A crescent-shaped or semicircular area or opening on a wall surface.

*******mansard* A roof having a double slope on all four sides, the lower slope being much steeper. In rowhouse design, a double-sloped roof on the building front, below a flat roof.

meeting rail The rail of a double-hung window sash designed to interlock with the adjacent rail.

modillion A projecting scroll-shaped bracket or simple horizontal block arranged in series under the soffit of a cornice.

molding A decorative band of varied contour, used to trim structural members, wall planes, and openings.

mullion A vertical primary framing member that separates paired or multiple windows within a single opening.

muntin A thin framing member that separates the panes of a window sash or glazed doors.

newel The main post at the foot of a stairway or stoop.

*******oriel* A projecting bay window carried on corbels or brackets.

*******Palladian window* A three-part window opening with a tall, round-arched center window flanked by smaller rectangular windows and separated by posts or pilasters.

panel A portion of a flat surface recessed, or raised from the surrounding area, distinctly set off by molding or some other decorative device.

****** *parapet* A low wall that serves as a vertical barrier at the edge of a roof, terrace, or other raised area; in a exterior wall, the part entirely above the roof.

paver A block of stone used in sidewalk or areaway paving.

pediment 1. In classical architecture, the triangular space forming the gable end of a roof above the horizontal cornice. 2. An ornamental gable, usually triangular, above a door or window.

pier 1. A column designed to support concentrated load. 2. A member, usually in the form of a thickened section, which forms an integral part of a wall; usually placed at intervals along the wall to provide lateral support or to take concentrated vertical loads.

****** *pilaster* An engaged pier or pillar, often with capital and base.

pitched Sloping, especially referring to a roof.

plinth A platform base supporting a column or pilaster.

pointing, repointing The treatment of joints between bricks, stone, or other masonry components by filling with mortar; also, called tuck-pointing.

portico A small porch composed of a roof supported by columns, often found in front of a doorway.

p.s.i. Pounds per square inch, a term generally used when describing water pressure when cleaning a building.

****** *quoin* A structural form, usually of masonry, used at the corners of a building for the purpose of reinforcement, frequently imitated for decorative purposes.

relief Carved or molded ornament that projects from a flat surface.

repointing See pointing.

return The part of a molding cornice, or wall surface that changes direction, usually at a right angle, toward the building wall.

reveal The side of an opening for a door or window between the frame and the outer surface of a wall, showing the wall's thickness.

rock faced Masonry treated with a rough surface that retains or simulates the irregular texture of natural stone.

rosette A round floral ornament, usually carved or painted.

round arch A semicircular arch.

****rowhouse** One of a group of an unbroken line of attached houses that share common side walls, known as party walls.

rubble stone Irregularly shaped, rough-textured stone laid in an irregular manner.

****rustication, rusticated** Stonework composed of large blocks of masonry separated by wide, recessed joints; often imitated in other materials for decorative purposes.

sash The secondary part of a window which holds the glazing in place; may be operable or fixed; usually constructed of horizontal and vertical members; sash may be subdivided with muntins.

secondary facade The facade that does not face a public thoroughfare, mews, or court and that does not possess significant architectural features.

segmental arch An arch which is in the form of a segment of a semicircle.

semidetached A building attached to a similar one on one side but unattached on the other.

shaft The vertical segment of a column or pilaster between the base and the capital.

shed dormer A dormer window covered by a single roof slope without a gable.

shingle A unit composed of wood, cement, asphalt compound, slate, tile or the like, employed in an overlapping series to cover roofs and walls.

shouldered arch An arch composed of a square-headed lintel supported at each end by a concave corbel.

shutter dogs The metal attachments which hold shutters in an open position against the face of a building.

sidelight A vertically framed area of fixed glass, often subdivided into panes, flanking a door.

****sill** The horizontal member at the bottom of a window or door.

soffit The exposed underside of any architectural element, especially a roof.

spalling The chipping or erosion of masonry caused by abuse or weathering.

****spandrel** 1. A panel between the top of one window and the sill of another window on the story directly above it. 2. An irregular, triangular wall segment adjacent to an arched opening.

stile A main vertical member of a door or window.

****stoop** The steps which lead to the front door; from the Dutch "stoep."

stretcher A masonry unit or brick laid horizontally with its length parallel to the wall.

****stringcourse** A narrow horizontal band of masonry, extending across the facade, which can be flush or projecting, and flat surfaced, molded, or richly carved.

stucco A coating for exterior walls made from Portland cement, lime, sand, and water.

subframe A secondary frame set within a masonry opening.

sugaring A term describing the deterioration of stone caused by the breaking up or dissolving of the stone surface.

surround The ornamental frame of a door or window.

swag A carved ornament in the form of a draped cloth or a festoon of fruit or flowers.

****terra cotta** Hard fired clay, either glazed or unglazed, molded into ornamental elements, wall cladding and roof tiles.

tie rod A metal tension rod connecting two structural members, such as gable walls or beams, acting as a brace or reinforcement; often anchored by means of a metal plate in such forms as an "S" or a star.

tracery An ornamental configuration of curved mullions in a Gothic sash.

transom 1. A horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window. 2. The cross-bar separating a door from the window, panel, or fanlight above it. 3. The window above the transom bar of a door.

transom bar A horizontal element that subdivides an opening, usually between a door and window.

trefoil A three-lobed decorative form used in Gothic architecture

tuck-pointing See pointing.

turret A small tower, usually supported by corbels.

volute A carved spiral form in classical architecture; often used in pairs as in the capitals of Ionic columns.

vousoir A wedge-shaped component of an arch.

wrought iron Iron that is worked by being forged or hammered.