

Energy Efficiency Tips for Historic Homes

Have an Energy Audit

The areas of your home that are driving up the cost of energy bills may not be what you think.

To make the most effective use of money and time have an energy audit to target areas that should be improved.

Porches, Awnings and Shutters

These original design features can provide shade during the sunny summer months and keep some of the wind at bay during the winter. Maintaining these existing features can make your home more energy efficient. Not to mention they are often some of the most character defining features of historic buildings.

Consider Storm Windows

Windows, whether historic or new, are a source of heat loss because they are a poor thermal barrier compared to solid walls. Adding storm windows can improve the thermal efficiency of any window without sacrificing historic character and achieve similar efficiency to new low-E vinyl replacements.

Try a Different Color

Light paint palettes can help reflect light rather than absorb the heat.

Inspect Insulation

The proper type of insulation in the right areas of your home can make for big savings. Priority areas are the attic, basement and crawlspaces which can contribute up to 20% of a homes heat loss. Insulation has the added benefit of being easy to do and not contributing any visual changes to your homes historic character.



Close Openings

To help reduce energy loss you can install attic door covers, fireplace draft stoppers, dryer vent seals.

Maintain Original Windows

We know this is contrary to popular opinion BUT numerous studies show that wood windows can perform as well as their “energy efficient” vinyl counterparts when properly maintained. Weather strip, caulk the interior trim and repair glazing to keep a window that can last a lifetime. Vinyl windows begin to fail after 15 years and studies show it can take up to 40 years to recoup the cost of their installation through their energy savings. Don’t just take our word for it, check out [Saving Windows, Saving Money](#)

Capitalize on Cross-Ventilation

Historic Homes were often built to consider airflow. Try opening windows on each side of your home before turning on the A.C.

Make Doors Airtight

Maintaining doors by painting, caulking and glazing glass openings in addition to weather stripping can reduce heat loss.

Plant a few Trees

Landscaping, while often regarded as purely aesthetic can also help save on energy costs. Evergreens (think pine, cedar, spruce) planted on the north and west sides of your home can block heavy winds. Evergreens or deciduous trees planted to the south and west can provide shade to help naturally cool your home. Bonus: Trees provide important habitat for wildlife so get your binoculars out.