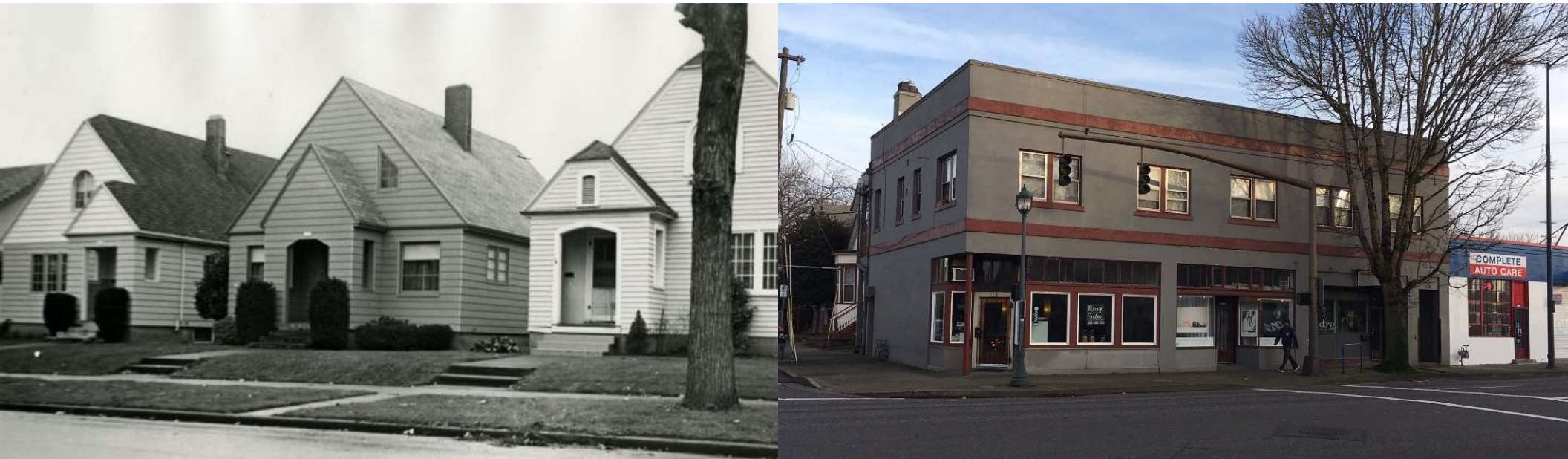


# Building Types & Forms

## Architectural vocabulary



**Handout developed for the  
West Linn Historic Nominations Workshop**  
October 14, 2023

**Kristen Minor, Minor Planning & Design**

# Type vs Style vs Use

**TYPE** is the most basic arrangement of the building's layout, in the floor plan and massing of structural components.

The building's **STYLE** is determined by the architectural and ornamental details and exterior features applied to the basic structure.

The **USE** of a building is its primary function. Use often determines its TYPE and sometimes its STYLE.

# Uses often dictate form

## Commercial examples:

Office building  
Restaurant  
Warehouse

## Institutional examples:

Educational  
Governmental  
Recreation (ex: auditorium)

## Residential examples:

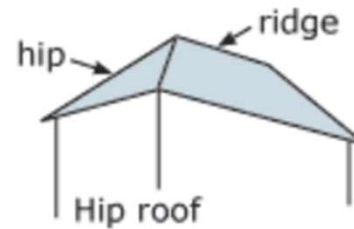
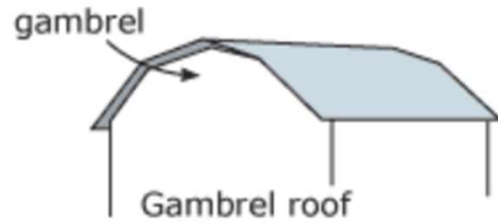
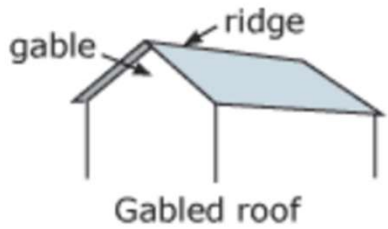
Single-dwelling  
Multiple dwelling  
Institutional housing (ex: dormitories)

## Other:

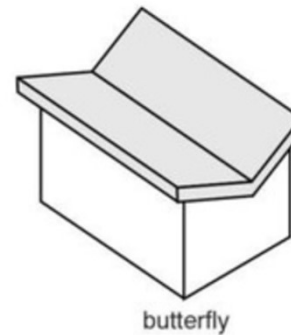
Religious, Agricultural, Transportation, etc.



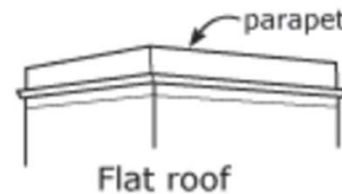
# Roofs



Clipped gable or jerkinhead



Cross-gable roof w/ Bellcast

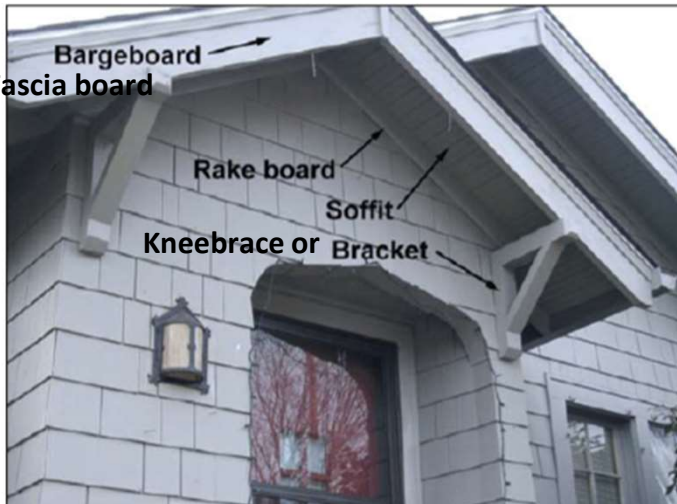
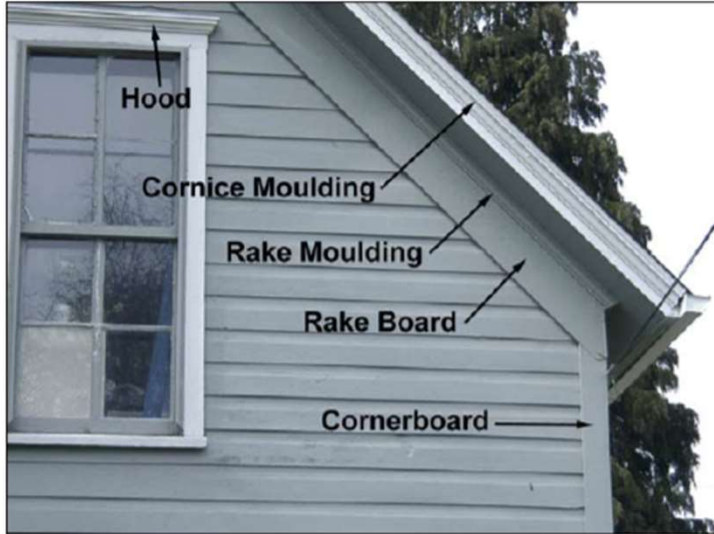


The roof shape of a building is a very important part of its FORM and STYLE identification. Pitched roofs are typically STEEP (45 degrees or more), MEDIUM-PITCH (45 degrees to about 30 degrees) OR LOW or SHALLOWLY-PITCHED (less than a 30 degree slope).

# Additional Roof-related vocabulary

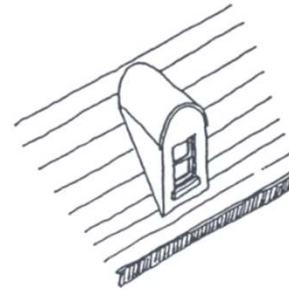
## Components

### Minimal eaves

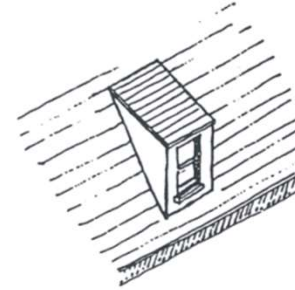


### Moderate Eaves

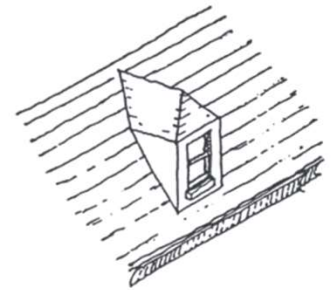
## Dormer Types



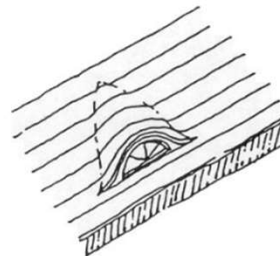
Rounded



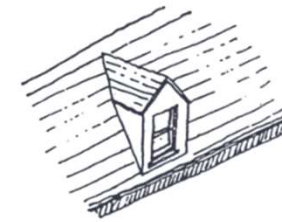
Shed



Hipped



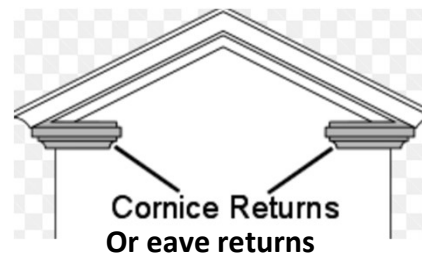
Eye-brow



Gabled



Engaged



Cornice Returns  
Or eave returns

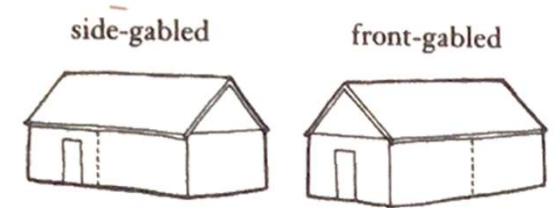
Eaves can be open, with exposed rafters, or boxed (closed)

# Plan and volume general terms

## Plan shapes

Square or rectangular, asymmetrical, round, “L”-shaped, “U”-shaped, etc

Front-gabled vs Side-gabled

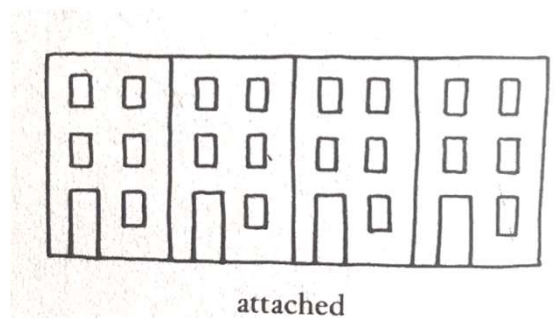


## Volumetric descriptions

Vertical, horizontal, boxy, “wedding cake,” etc.

Attached vs. detached

Base, Middle, Top



Start a description with the most basic identification of plan shape, height, and roof form, along with how or where the building sits in relationship to its site and where the primary entry is.



# Height (number of stories)



1-story



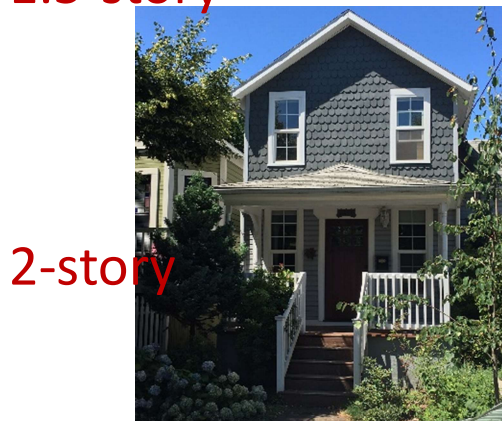
1.5-story



A full story has all exterior walls extending up at least 6 feet before hitting the roof slope.

A half story is habitable space, but walls may extend only a few feet up before the space is enclosed by the slope of the roof (and/or exterior walls are inset from those below).

An attic is a small area that may be accessible and may have a window, but is not truly habitable and not counted as a half-level.



2-story



A basement is space at a level below the main entry level. It also may have windows and be usable space, but is not counted as a floor unless walls are 6 feet or more in height (exposed).

# Common Residential Forms- prewar



## RESIDENCES

★ Basement House	RA	(1930-1955)
★ Bungalow	RU	(1905-1920)
★ Central Blk w/Proj Bays	RJ	(1885-1915)
★ Central Passage	RC	(1840s-1900)
★ Crosswing	RX	(1880-1910, 1920-30)
★ Crosswing - Center	RV	(1880-1910)
★ Crosswing - Double	RW	(1880-1910)
★ Crosswing - Half	RY	(1880-1910)
★ Double Cell	RD	(1840s-1890)
★ Double Pile	RR	(1840s-1880)
★ Dugout	RK	(1840s-1900)
★ Foursquare (Box)	RF	(1900-1920)
★ Hall-Parlor	RH	(1840s-1910)
★ Pair House	RP	(1853-1890)
★ Period Cottage	RI	(1910-1935)

**Foursquare:** Cubic form w simple pyramidal or hip roof, broad eaves. 2 to 2.5 story. Hipped low central dormer. Wide front porch, typ. full width. Door usually offset but can be central. Often lap siding exterior. Prairie School, Craftsman, Colonial Rev, or Vernacular in style. 1895-1930.



**Bungalow:** 1 to 1.5 story house, almost always Craftsman in style (but not always!). Large front porch, often full-width, with tapered piers. Low pitch gable roof, wide eaves. Brackets or rafter tails visible. End wall chimney, large living room window, large dormer (often shed dormer). 1905-1920.



# Common Residential Forms



**Residential Court (1915-1950), Double-loaded Corridor Apt (1920-32), Double House/Duplex**



**World War II-Era Cottage (1930-1950)**

**Period Cottage 1910-1935, often English cottage or Tudor but can be other styles. Small from street view, extends back.**

**RESIDENCES - MULTI-FAMILY**

- ★ Corner Entrance Apt. AM (1920-32)
- ★ Double House/Duplex AA
- ★ Double-Loaded Corridor Apt. AL (c. 1920-32)
- ★ Hotel Court AN (U or E plan)
- ★ Residential Court AC (1915-1950)
- ★ Row House AB (1890-1915)
- ★ Walk-up Apartment AK (primarily 1902-c.1917)
- ★ Other Apt./Hotel Plan AZ

**RESIDENCES**

- ★ Rectangular Block
- ★ Salt Box
- ★ Shotgun
- ★ Side Passage/Entry
- ★ Single Cell
- ★ Temple Form
- ★ Other Residential Type

- RB (1885-1915)
- RL (1840s-1870)
- RG (1875-1910)
- RE (1840s-1920)
- RS (1840s-1910)
- RT (1840s-1875)
- RZ

# Common Residential Forms- postwar



Ranch



Residential- Split-level Ranch, 1960+



Cape Cod (c1930s- 1950s)



Shed Geometric (1960+)



Contemporary

## RESIDENCES - LATE 20TH CENTURY

★ Cape Cod	HH	(c. 1930s-1950s)
★ Contemporary	HK	(1960+)
★ Early Ranch w/Garage	HD	(Late 1940s - 1950s)
★ Early Ranch/Rambler	HC	(Late 1940s - 1950s)
★ Mobile Home	HG	(1970+)
★ Ranch w/Garage	HF	(1950s+)
★ Ranch/Rambler	HE	(1950s+)
★ Shed/Geometric	HL	(1960+)
★ Split Entry	HN	(1960+)
★ Split Entry w/Garage	HO	(1960+)
★ Split Level	HI	(1960+)
★ Split Level w/Garage	HJ	(1960+)
★ WWII-Era Cottage	HA	(Late 1930s - early 1950s)
★ WWII-Era Cottage w/Garage	HB	(Late 1930s - early 1950s)
★ Other Late 20th Century Type	HZ	

# Common Vernacular Forms



Utilitarian- Vernacular Barn, c1930 and c1910 (below)



Utilitarian- Vernacular Barn. c1880



Commercial-  
Western False  
Front, no date

\*The term vernacular architecture refers to buildings made by common, local builders in an informal way, rather than by architects using design methodologies. During construction, locally available resources and traditions are used to address local needs and circumstances.

# Commercial Building Types and Forms

## ANATOMY OF A MAIN STREET BUILDING



developed by

**Michael  
Houser**

*State  
Architectural  
Historian*



May 2011

# ANATOMY OF A MAIN STREET BUILDING

Terry Building; Port Townsend



**Cornice**  
The projecting elements at the top of the exterior wall.

**Upper Floor(s)**  
The non-retail volume above the ground floor.

**Storefront**  
The front exterior wall of a commercial space, typically with large area of glass.

**Pilaster**  
An attached rectangular column.

**Bulkhead**  
The area between the sidewalk and the display windows: can be of wood, tile, or metal, or can be glazed.

**Display Window**  
The main areas of clear glass on a storefront behind which goods are arranged. Usually of polished plate glass.

**Transom**  
Upper windows of a storefront; can be operable or fixed, clear or divided.



**Bracket**  
A support for a projection, typically constructed of wood, press metal or cast stone.

**Window Hood**  
A projecting member above a window that is both structural and decorative; typically made of stone, metal or wood.

**Sash**  
Operable frame filled with glass.

**Sill**  
Horizontal member immediately below the window assembly.

**Lintel**  
Structural member above a storefront that support the upper wall.

# ANATOMY OF A MAIN STREET BUILDING

Stoller Building; Camas



# ANATOMY OF A MAIN STREET BUILDING

Baker – Boyer National Bank Building; Walla Walla



## Cornice

The projecting elements at the top of the exterior wall.

## Upper Floor(s)

The non-retail volume above the ground floor.

## Storefront

The front exterior wall of a commercial space, typically with large area of glass.

## Pilaster(s)

An attached rectangular column.

## Bulkhead

The area between the sidewalk and the display windows: can be of wood, tile, or metal, or can be glazed.

## Display Window

The main areas of clear glass on a storefront behind which goods are arranged. Usually of polished plate glass.

## Modillions

A series of scroll-shaped brackets supporting the corona of a cornice.

## String Course

A projecting member that is both structural and decorative; typically made of stone, metal or wood.

## Bay(s)

Grouping of windows (example has four bays).

## Mullion

A vertical member separating windows, or panels set in a series.

## Capitol

Top portion of a column or pilaster crowing the shaft

## Transom

Upper windows of a storefront; can be operable or fixed, clear or divided.

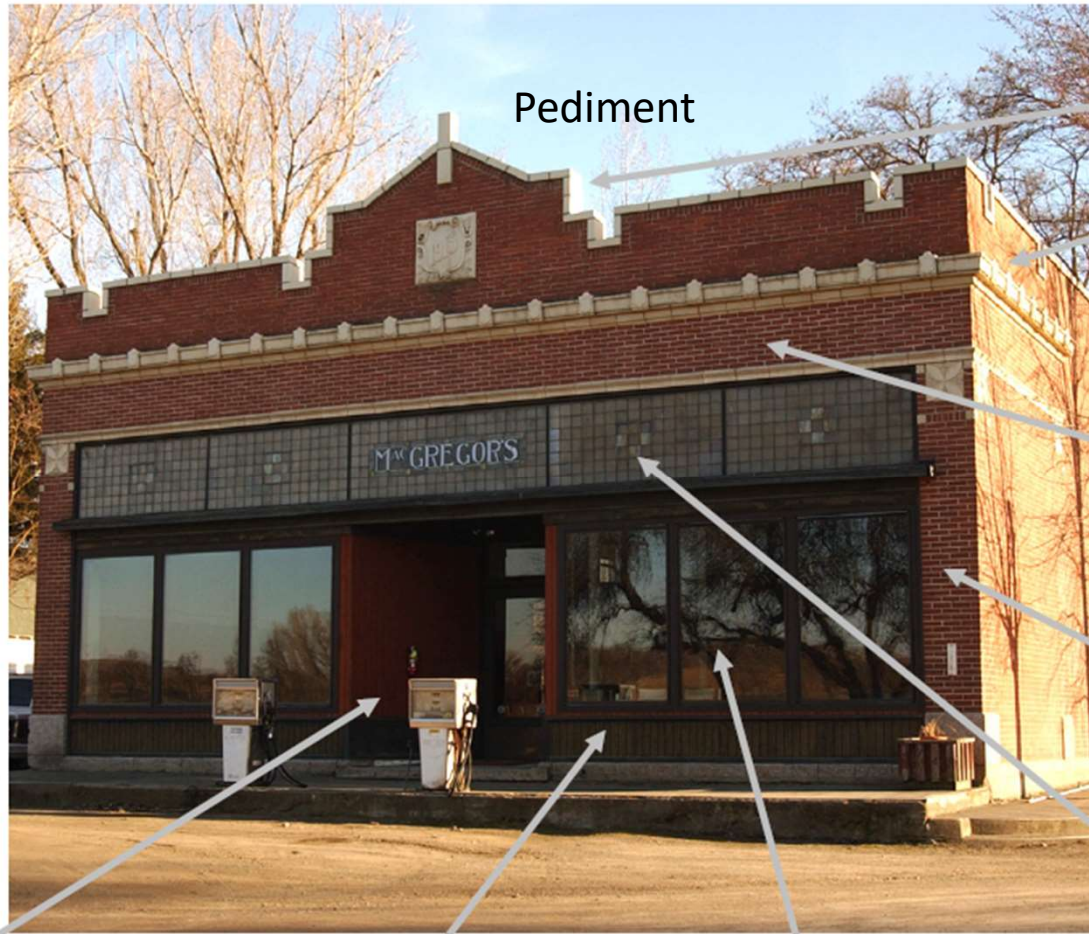
# ANATOMY OF A MAIN STREET BUILDING

McGregor's Store; Hooper



**Cornice**  
The projecting elements at the top of the exterior wall.

**Storefront**  
The front exterior wall of a commercial space, typically with large area of glass.



**Parapet**  
A low, solid, protective wall at the edge of a roof.

**String Course**  
A projecting member above a window that is both structural and decorative; typically made of stone, metal or wood.

**Exterior Finish**  
Exterior surfacing material.

**Pilaster**  
An attached rectangular column.

**Recessed Entry**  
An entrance door which is set back from the main façade of the building.

**Bulkhead**  
The area between the sidewalk and the display windows: can be of wood, tile, or metal, or can be glazed.

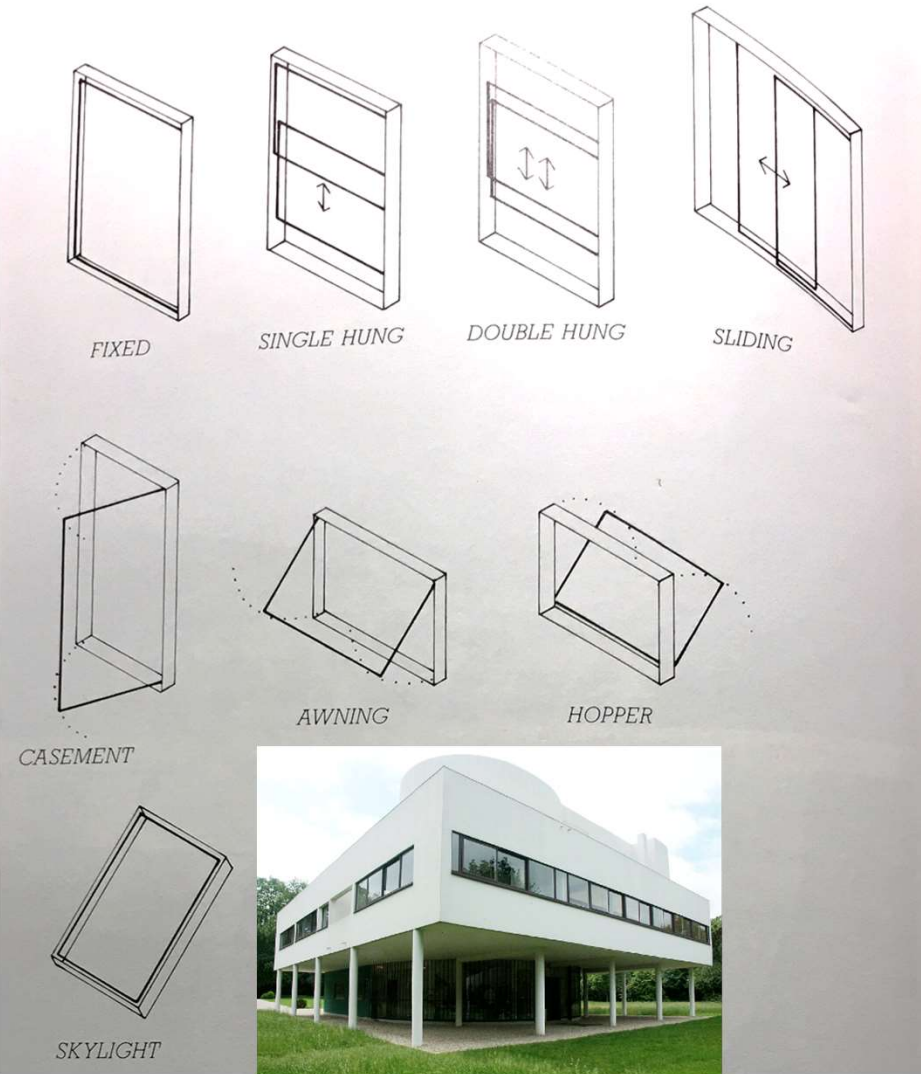
**Display Window**  
The main areas of clear glass on a storefront behind which goods are arranged. Usually of polished plate glass.

**Transom**  
Upper windows of a storefront; can be operable or fixed, clear or divided.



# Fenestration (pattern of openings)

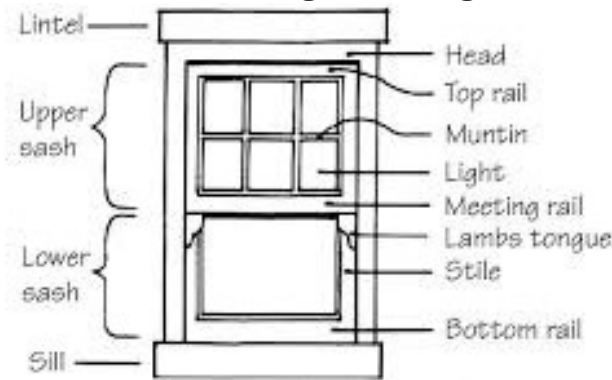
## Terms used to describe windows



Ribbon windows



Multipane windows (6 over 9)  
 "True" divided lights vs "grids"



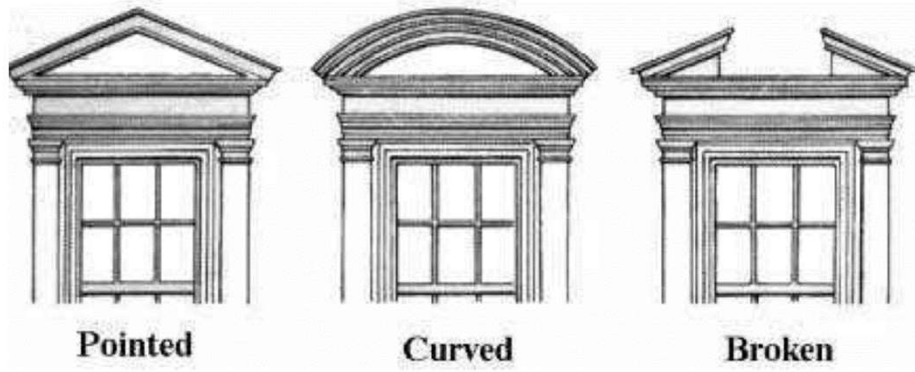
Parts of a double-hung window

Describe windows by their operation and material.

Describe the overall pattern in terms of alignments, "bays," groupings, or lack thereof.

Each façade or side of the building should be described, starting with the front. Use cardinal directions if possible ("the west side" not "the right-hand elevation")

# Elements from Classical Architecture



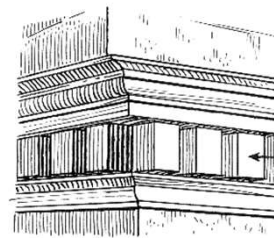
Pediments



Balustrade



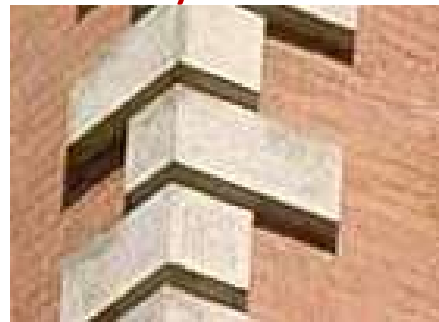
Keystone



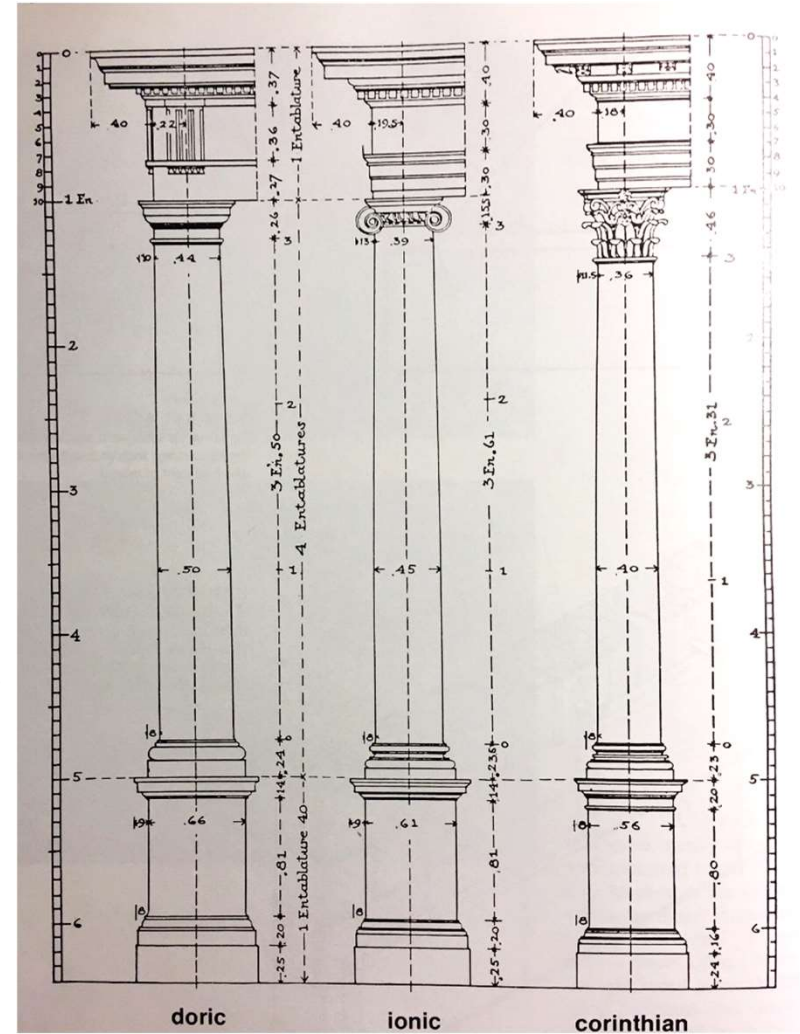
Dentils



Palladian window



Quoining



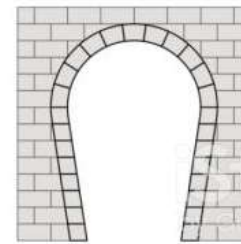
The 3 Orders of Columns

(columns may be fluted, engaged, or may be flattened into pilasters)

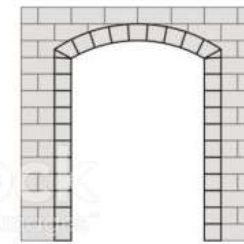
# Arches, masonry, and forms



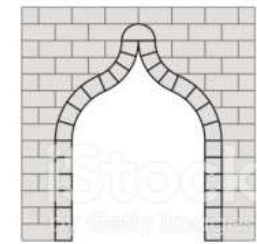
Roman, or half-round



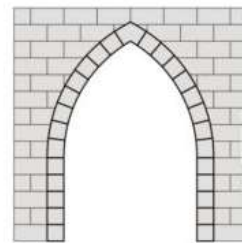
Horseshoe



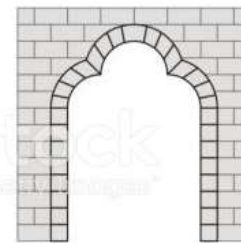
Segmental



Ogee



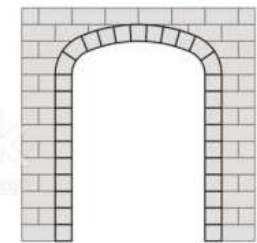
Gothic



Trefoil



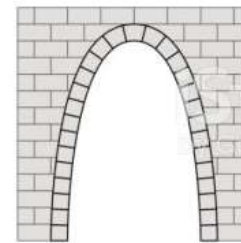
FLAT



Basket



Tudor



Parabolic



MOORISH



Multifoil



Corbels; soldier coursing

