

SHUTTERS & AWNINGS

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

Shutters and awnings were the means in the past by which windows and doors were shaded or protected from storms and other intrusions. Although their original functions have been addressed by other means such as air conditioning and security systems, they remain popular decorative elements. To maintain a house's historic character, they occasionally need to be repaired or replaced. Shutters have proliferated as applied, fixed units made of contemporary, low-maintenance materials. The desire for historical authenticity and environmental concerns have also created a demand for authentic operating wood shutters, and the function of shutters and awnings is now being reevaluated.

Operable shutter louvers allow control of heat gain and glare, while providing diffuse light and promoting natural ventilation through a house and preserving some degree of privacy. Awnings provide an effective means of shade, reflecting 80% to 90% of sunlight without obstructing the view, but some awnings trap heated air against windows. Shutters also have been revived as a means of protecting windows on homes built in high-wind regions.

New innovations include automated operation and more durable materials. Traditionally made of disease-resistant wood species, shutters are now available in aluminum and vinyl. High wind or hurricane-resistant shutters require the strength of aluminum. Awnings, once exclusively manufactured of canvas, now employ new, dimensionally stable and rot-resistant fabric materials that can withstand prolonged exposure to ultra violet light, and significantly reduce maintenance. The repair of existing shutters may use similar methods and materials, well documented in "how to" repair books. Awnings require regular replacement of the fabric, presenting the opportunity to employ more durable materials.

TECHNIQUES, MATERIALS, TOOLS

1. REPAIR EXISTING SHUTTERS AND AWNINGS.

Conventional shutters and awnings may be repaired by traditional methods as described in the window frame section. Awnings are typically designed for ready replacement of the fabric material. Several sources of replacement materials are identified under product information.

ADVANTAGES: Repair of existing units with common methods will preserve authenticity and improve durability. New materials available have significantly improved the anticipated life span of these materials.

DISADVANTAGES: The selection of original shutters or awnings may have been inappropriate and make them difficult to maintain.

2. REPLACEMENT OF SHUTTERS AND AWNINGS.

New shutters and awning products provide greater convenience, security, and durability.

ADVANTAGES: New products often provide distinct advantages previously unavailable. Apart from the convenience of operation or increased durability new storm shutters and shading devices provide tangible benefits in lower energy consumption and possibly reduced insurance premiums.

DISADVANTAGES: Authentic shutters and awnings are typically expensive to replicate.

FURTHER READING

Residential Windows, John Carmody, Stephen Selkowitz, and Lisa Hescong, New York: W.W. Norton, 1996.
"Serious Shutters," Brad Lemley, *This Old House*, July/August 1996, pp. 88-91.

PRODUCT INFORMATION

TRADITIONAL WOOD SHUTTERS

Cobblestone Mill Woodworks, Inc., 802 Tom Charles Lane, Canton, GA 30115; 800-591 4597.

Vixen Hill Manufacturing Company, Main Street, Elverson, PA 19520; www.vixenhill.com.

Kestrel Shutters, P.O. Box 12, St. Peters, PA 19470; 800-494 4321; www.DIYShutters.com.

METAL AND FABRIC AWNINGS

American Building Products by Hindman Manufacturing Co., P.O. Box 1808, Centralia, IL 62801; 800-851-0865.

Dickinson Elberton Mills, Inc., 120 Seaboard Street S.E., Elberton, GA 30635; 800-433-1748.

Somfy Systems, Inc., 47 Commerce Drive, Cranbury, NJ 08512; 609-395-1300 (control mechanisms).

Sunbrella, Glen Raven Mills, Inc., Glen Raven, NC 27217; 910-227-6211.

STORM RESISTANT SHUTTERS

Aluminum Service, Inc., 2021 North 40th Street, Tampa, FL, 33605; 813-247-4667; www.aserv.com.

Roll-A-Way, Inc., 10601 Oak Street N.E., St. Petersburg, FL 33716; 800-683-9505.