



**LEFT:** The building's windows are now good as new; repairing them proved the most cost-effective option. **ABOVE:** Pre-work, the windows were showing significant damage.

## Winning Windows



A window case study in Astoria, Oregon, shows why repairs are more cost-effective than replacement. We spoke with Joy Sears, restoration specialist at the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), to learn more. **BY DEMETRA APOSPOROS**

**DEMETRA APOSPOROS:** What was this project, and how did you get involved?

**JOY SEARS:** The Owens-Adair senior housing facility, built in 1931 and historically known as St. Mary's Hospital, wanted to replace their windows after a resident was opening her window and the sash cord broke, causing the window to fall on and injure her arm. The facility's project manager contacted Rosemary Johnson, planner and historic preservation officer for the city of Astoria, to discuss their options, and she brought me in to consult.

**DA:** How bad were the windows?

**JS:** They hadn't been well-maintained for decades—they were loose and leaked air, and many had broken sash cords—but they were readily fixable.

**DA:** They thought replacements were the only solution?

**JS:** They thought vinyl windows were the

only reasonable option in terms of cost and energy efficiency, so I gave them a lot of information on the energy efficiency of restored windows. Once they got those numbers, they were shocked.

*Preserving the existing windows met everyone's expectations.*

**DA:** What happened next?

**JS:** I suggested some companies that could do the repair work. We also discussed how the repairs could be done—the tenants were pretty protective of their spaces and had concerns about boarded-up windows or interior containment areas during the project. In the end, the project manager agreed to take this new information and do more research into his options. Ultimately, they decided to have the windows restored by Chosen Wood Window Maintenance.

**DA:** How involved were the repairs?

**JS:** Because the existing historic window frames were thick enough, they were able to route the sash to accommodate double-paned glass with new glazing. They also replaced the sash cord with a spring balance system with fixed upper sashes, which was less invasive than having to disassemble the original pulleys. And the old storm windows were kept in place during the repairs—so no boarded-up windows.

**DA:** What was the final cost?

**JS:** They paid \$259,000, or \$1,036 per window. New replacement windows would have cost them \$680,000, or \$2,720 per window.

**DA:** What kind of energy savings have they seen from this investment?

**JS:** They saved \$1,000 off their first month's energy bills.

**DA:** Sounds like a success all around.

**JS:** I was happy that in the end, preserving the existing windows met everyone's expectations.

For more information, visit [oregon.gov/oprd/hcd/shpo](http://oregon.gov/oprd/hcd/shpo).