

Appendix F: Glossary of Architectural Terms Used in the Historic Structure Report

The following glossary, in alphabetical order, contains definitions of selected architectural terms used in the Historic Structure Report. All definitions are taken from *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction*, 3rd Edition, edited by Cyril Harris (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000) unless otherwise noted.

Glossary

Artisan: A skilled manual worker (*The Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Home and Office Edition* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1998)).

Baluster: One of a number of short vertical members, often circular in section, used to support a stair handrail or a coping.

Balustrade: An entire railing system (as along the edge of a balcony) including a top rail and its balusters, and sometimes a bottom rail.

Efflorescence: An encrustation of soluble salts, commonly white, deposited on the surface of stone, brick, plaster, or mortar; usually caused by free alkalies leached from mortar or adjacent concrete as moisture moves through it.

Extant: Not lost or destroyed (*The Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Home and Office Edition* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1998)).

Lintel: A horizontal structural member (such as beam) over an opening which carries the weight of the wall above it; usually of steel, stone, or wood.

Parapet: A low guarding wall at any point of sudden drop, as at the edge of a terrace, roof, battlement, balcony, etc. In an exterior wall, fire wall, or party wall, the part entirely above the roof.

Plinth: A square or rectangular base for column, pilaster, or door framing.

Polychromy: The practice of decorating architectural elements, sculpture, etc., in a variety of colors.

Repointing: The removal of mortar from between the joints of masonry units and the replacing of it with new mortar.

Soffit: The exposed undersurface of any overhead component of a building, such as an arch, balcony, beam, cornice, lintel, or vault.

Transom window: A glazed light above the intermediate horizontal member of a doorframe, window frame, or similar structure of a door.

Vernacular: Architecture that makes use of common regional forms and materials at a particular place and time; sometimes includes strong ethnic influences of an immigrant population; usually modest, unassuming, and unpretentious, and often a mixture of traditional and more modern styles or a hybrid of several styles.

Visor roof: A small eaves-like projection that extends only along one face of a building, usually the façade.

Wythe: Each continuous vertical section of wall, one masonry unit in thickness.