

# Brennan realty services LLC

BROWNSTONE BROOKLYN'S RESIDENT EXPERTS

## Glossary of Architectural Terms

*Adapted from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Rowhouse Manual*

**Architrave** 1. The lowest part of a classical entablature. 2. A molding enframing an opening such as a window.

**Areaway** The open space between a rowhouse and the sidewalk, usually beside the stoop.

**Awning** A projecting shading device, usually of canvas, mounted on the outside of a door or window.

**Baluster** One of a series of short vertical posts, often ornamental, used to support a rail.

**Balustrade** A railing composed of balusters and a top rail running along the edge of a porch, balcony, roof, or stoop.

**Bay** A regularly repeating division of a facade, marked by fenestration.

**Bay window** A projecting form containing windows that rises from the ground or from some other support, such as a porch roof; see also oriel.

**Bracket** A projecting angled or curved form used as a support, found in conjunction with balconies, lintels, pediments, cornices, etc.

**Brick molding** A milled wood trim piece covering the gap between the window frame and masonry, which can be rectilinear, curved or composite-curved.

**Cap flashing** A waterproof sheet that seals the tops of cornices and walls.

**Capital** The topmost member, usually decorated, of a column or pilaster.

**Casement** A window sash that is hinged on the side.

**Cast iron** A type of iron, mass-produced in the nineteenth century, created by pouring molten iron into a mold; used for ornament, garden furniture, and building parts.

**Clapboard** Wood siding composed of horizontal, overlapping boards, the lower edges of which are usually thicker than the upper.

**Colonnade** A row of regularly spaced columns supporting an entablature.

**Colonnette** A diminutive column which is usually either short or slender.

**Column** A vertical cylindrical support. In classical design it is composed of a base (except in the Greek Doric order), a long, gradually tapered shaft, and a capital.

**Console** A scroll-shaped projecting bracket that supports a horizontal member.

**Coping** A protective cap, top or cover of a wall parapet, commonly sloping to protect masonry from water.

**Corbel** An architectural member which projects upward and outward from a wall that supports a horizontal member.

**Cornice** A projecting molding that tops the elements to which it is attached; used especially for a roof or the crowning member of an entablature, located above the frieze.

**Cresting** A decorative element, frequently of iron, usually located at the peak or edge of a roof.

**Crocket** An ornamental foliate form placed at regularly spaced intervals on the slopes and edges of the spires, pinnacles, gables, and similar elements of Gothic buildings.

**Cupola** A small dome on a base crowning a roof.

**Dentil** A small, square, toothlike block in a series beneath a cornice.

**Doric** One of five classical orders, recognizable by its simple capital. The Greek Doric column has a fluted shaft and no base; the Roman Doric column may be fluted or smooth and rests on a molded base.

**Dormer** A vertical structure, usually housing a window, that projects from a sloping roof and is covered by a separate roof structure.

**Double-hung** A type of window with two sash, each sliding on a vertical track.

**Drip molding** A projecting molding around the head of a door or window frame, often extended horizontally at right angles to the sides of the frame, intended to channel rain away from the opening; also called a drip lintel.

**Eave** The overhanging edge of a roof.

**Egg and dart** An ornamental band molding of egg forms alternating with dart forms.

**Elevation** An exterior face of a building; also, a drawing thereof.

**Enframement** A general term referring to any elements surrounding a window or door.

**English bond** A pattern of brickwork with alternate courses of headers and stretchers.

**Entablature** In classical architecture, a major horizontal member carried by a column(s) or pilaster(s); it consists of an architrave, a frieze, and a cornice. The proportions and detailing are different for each order, and strictly prescribed.

**Eyebrow dormer** A curved dormer with no sides, covered by a smooth protrusion from the sloping roof.

**Facade** The main exterior face of a building, sometimes distinguished from the other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

**Fanlight** A semicircular or semielliptical window above a door, usually inset with radiating glazing bars.

**fascia** A horizontal, flat element, often combined with a cornice and architrave.

**Fenestration** The organization and design of windows in a building.

**Festoon** A carved ornament in the form of a band, loop, or wreath, suspended from two points; also called a "garland" or a "swag."

**Finial** The crowning ornament of a pointed element, such as a spire.

**Flashing** Strips of sheet metal bent to fit the angle between any two roof surfaces or between the roof and any projection, such as a chimney.

**Flemish bond** A pattern of brickwork in which each course consists of headers and stretchers laid alternately; each header is centered between the stretcher above and the stretcher below it.

**Foliate** Decorative leafage, often applied to capitals or moldings.

**French door, window** A tall casement window that reaches to the floor, usually arranged in two leaves as a double door.

**Frieze** 1. The middle horizontal member of a classical entablature, above the architrave and below the cornice. 2. A similar decorative band in a stringcourse, or near the top of an interior wall below the cornice.

**Gable** The upper portion of an end wall formed by the slope of a roof.

**Galvanized iron** Iron that has been coated with zinc to inhibit rusting.

**Glazing bar** See mullion.

**Gothic sash** A window sash pattern composed of mullions that cross to form pointed arches.

**Grille** A decorative, openwork grating, usually of iron, used to protect a window, door, or other opening.

**Gutter** A shallow channel of metal or wood set immediately below and along the eaves of a building to catch and carry off rainwater.

**Header** A masonry wall unit of brick which is laid so that its short end is exposed.

**Hood** A projection that shelters an element such as a door or window.

**Ionic** One of the five classical orders, characterized by capitals with spiral elements called "volutes," a fasciated entablature, continuous frieze, dentils in its cornice, and by its elegant detailing.

**Jigsaw carving** Wooden ornament cut with a thin narrow saw blade.

**Joist** One of a series of parallel timber beams used to support floor and ceiling loads, and supported in turn by larger beams, girders, or bearing walls; the widest dimension is vertically oriented.

**Key** A block, often used in a series, which projects beyond the edge of the enframing of an opening and is joined with the surrounding masonry. A block handled in such a manner is keyed to the masonry; see quoin.

**Keystone** The central wedge-shaped member of a masonry arch; also used as a decorative element on arches in wood structures.

**Latticework** Thin strips of wood arranged in a netlike grid pattern, often set diagonally.

**Leaded window** A window composed of small panes, usually diamond-shaped or rectangular, held in place by narrow strips of cast lead.

**Leader** A horizontal or vertical cylinder, usually made of metal, which carries water from the gutter to the ground.

**Lintel** A horizontal structural element over an opening which carries the weight of the wall above it.

**Loggia** 1. An arcaded or colonnaded structure, open on one or more sides, sometimes with an upper story.  
2. An arcaded or colonnaded porch or gallery attached to a larger structure.

**Lunette** A crescent-shaped or semicircular area or opening on a wall surface.

**Mansard** A roof having a double slope on all four sides, the lower slope being much steeper. In rowhouse design, a double-sloped roof on the building front, below a flat roof.

**Meeting rail** The rail of a double-hung window sash designed to interlock with the adjacent rail.

**Modillion** A projecting scroll-shaped bracket or simple horizontal block arranged in series under the soffit of a cornice.

**Molding** A decorative band of varied contour, used to trim structural members, wall planes, and openings.

**Mullion** A vertical primary framing member that separates paired or multiple windows within a single opening.

**Muntin** A thin framing member that separates the panes of a window sash or glazed doors.

**Newel** The main post at the foot of a stairway or stoop.

**Oriel** A projecting bay window carried on corbels or brackets.

**Palladian window** A three-part window opening with a tall, round-arched center window flanked by smaller rectangular windows and separated by posts or pilasters.

**Panel** A portion of a flat surface recessed, or raised from the surrounding area, distinctly set off by molding or some other decorative device.

**Parapet** A low wall that serves as a vertical barrier at the edge of a roof, terrace, or other raised area; in a exterior wall, the part entirely above the roof.

**Paver** A block of stone used in sidewalk or areaway paving.

**Pediment** 1. In classical architecture, the triangular space forming the gable end of a roof above the horizontal cornice. 2. An ornamental gable, usually triangular, above a door or window.

**Pier** 1. A column designed to support concentrated load. 2. A member, usually in the form of a thickened section, which forms an integral part of a wall; usually placed at intervals along the wall to provide lateral support or to take concentrated vertical loads.

**Pilaster** An engaged pier or pillar, often with capital and base.

**Pitched** Sloping, especially referring to a roof.

**Plinth** A platform base supporting a column or pilaster.

**Pointing, repointing** The treatment of joints between bricks, stone, or other masonry components by filling with mortar; also, called tuck-pointing.

**Portico** A small porch composed of a roof supported by columns, often found in front of a doorway.

**P.S.I.** Pounds per square inch, a term generally used when describing water pressure when cleaning a building.

**Quoin** A structural form, usually of masonry, used at the corners of a building for the purpose of reinforcement, frequently imitated for decorative purposes.

**Relief** Carved or molded ornament that projects from a flat surface.

**Repointing** See pointing.

**Return** The part of a molding cornice, or wall surface that changes direction, usually at a right angle, toward the building wall.

**Reveal** The side of an opening for a door or window between the frame and the outer surface of a wall, showing the wall's thickness.

**Rock** faced Masonry treated with a rough surface that retains or simulates the irregular texture of natural stone.

**Rosette** A round floral ornament, usually carved or painted.

**Round** arch A semicircular arch.

**Rowhouse** One of a group of an unbroken line of attached houses that share common side walls, known as party walls.

**Rubble stone** Irregularly shaped, rough-textured stone laid in an irregular manner.

**Rustication, rusticated** Stonework composed of large blocks of masonry separated by wide, recessed joints; often imitated in other materials for decorative purposes.

**Sash** The secondary part of a window which holds the glazing in place; may be operable or fixed; usually constructed of horizontal and vertical members; sash may be subdivided with muntins.

**Secondary facade** The facade that does not face a public thoroughfare, mews, or court and that does not possess significant architectural features.

**Segmental arch** An arch which is in the form of a segment of a semicircle.

**Semidetached** A building attached to a similar one on one side but unattached on the other.

**Shaft** The vertical segment of a column or pilaster between the base and the capital.

**Shed dormer** A dormer window covered by a single roof slope without a gable.

**Shingle** A unit composed of wood, cement, asphalt compound, slate, tile or the like, employed in an overlapping series to cover roofs and walls.

**Shouldered arch** An arch composed of a square-headed lintel supported at each end by a concave corbel.

**Shutter dogs** The metal attachments which hold shutters in an open position against the face of a building.

**Sidelight** A vertically framed area of fixed glass, often subdivided into panes, flanking a door.

**Sill** The horizontal member at the bottom of a window or door.

**Soffit** The exposed underside of any architectural element, especially a roof.

**Spalling** The chipping or erosion of masonry caused by abuse or weathering.

**Spandrel** 1. A panel between the top of one window and the sill of another window on the story directly above it. 2. An irregular, triangular wall segment adjacent to an arched opening.

**Stile** A main vertical member of a door or window.

**Stoop** The steps which lead to the front door; from the Dutch "stoep."

**Stretcher** A masonry unit or brick laid horizontally with its length parallel to the wall.

**Stringcourse** A narrow horizontal band of masonry, extending across the facade, which can be flush or projecting, and flat surfaced, molded, or richly carved.

**Stucco** A coating for exterior walls made from Portland cement, lime, sand, and water.

**Subframe** A secondary frame set within a masonry opening.

**Sugaring** A term describing the deterioration of stone caused by the breaking up or dissolving of the stone surface.

**Surround** The ornamental frame of a door or window.

**Swag** A carved ornament in the form of a draped cloth or a festoon of fruit or flowers.

**Terra cotta** Hard fired clay, either glazed or unglazed, molded into ornamental elements, wall cladding and roof tiles.

**Tie rod** A metal tension rod connecting two structural members, such as gable walls or beams, acting as a brace or reinforcement; often anchored by means of a metal plate in such forms as an "S" or a star.

**Tracery** An ornamental configuration of curved mullions in a Gothic sash.

**Transom** 1. A horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window. 2. The cross-bar separating a door from the window, panel, or fanlight above it. 3. The window above the transom bar of a door.

**Transom bar** A horizontal element that subdivides an opening, usually between a door and window.

**Trefoil** A three-lobed decorative form used in Gothic architecture

**Tuck-pointing** See pointing.

**Turret** A small tower, usually supported by corbels.

**Volute** A carved spiral form in classical architecture; often used in pairs as in the capitals of Ionic columns.

**Vousoir** A wedge-shaped component of an arch.

**Wrought iron** Iron that is worked by being forged or hammered.