



## Replacement In Kind: Electrical Systems

### **Replacing Electrical Systems In Kind**

Wiring materials and installation techniques from different eras provide an important record of how inhabitants interacted with the building and evolved their living habits to match changes in technology. There were many changes in electrical wiring and their associated components over the years however wiring has not significantly changed since grounding was introduced to Romex cable post World War II.

In many cases early electrical systems can be retained in service. This document does not deal with the actual retention of existing electrical service but assumes the decision to install new wiring for code and safety concerns has taken place and therefore the decision needs to be made about retaining the remaining electrical wiring and fixtures.

### **Guidelines for In Kind Replacement of Electrical Systems**

- The primary goal should be to leave all previous wiring in place as a record of use and interactions with the site.
  - If the evidence is compelling that wiring is modern, permission may be sought from team leader property care to forego additional documentation steps noted below.
  - Space limitations in wall cavities may prevent the retention of older wiring in situ.
- Electrical components (terminals, connectors, switches, resistors, fuses and fuse boxes, etc) may have historical value and efforts should be made to retain all the components of those systems in situ.
  - Decisions to remove electrical components should be referred to the team leader property care and the *Proactive Preservation and Interpretation Planning* (PPIP) committee may be asked to make a decision.
- Most lighting fixtures are considered to be collections items and questions of rewiring or replacing fixtures should be referred to the collections team.
- Basic documentation:
  - Document the starting point, ending point, path, and material of the wiring in writing, images and on a plan.
  - Retain a 12 inch length of the wire sealed in a plastic bag labeled with the house name, date of removal, location of removal and the project name.
  - Be sure to ask the electrician what is unusual about the wiring, why it is not current to today's code and include in completion report.
  - Accession the samples as described the white papers for Architectural Fragments.