Certificate in Antique and Vintage Car Appraisal (Germany) (Part II)

Interior And Exterior Trim Assessment

Exterior trim refers to the decorative and protective elements that frame, accentuate, or shield the outer surfaces of a vehicle. In antique and vintage cars, these components often serve both aesthetic and functional purposes, reflecting the design language of the era and the technological capabilities of the time. Understanding the terminology associated with exterior trim is essential for accurate appraisal, restoration planning, and condition reporting.

Chrome plating is a process in which a thin layer of chromium is electro-deposited onto a metal substrate. The result is a highly reflective, corrosion-resistant surface that was popular on cars from the 1920s through the 1970s. When assessing chrome, appraisers look for uniform thickness, surface continuity, and signs of oxidation such as “white rust.” A well-preserved chrome piece will retain its mirror-like shine without pitting or flaking. Challenges arise when original chrome has been over-polished or replaced with modern nickel-chrome alloys, which may affect authenticity.

Nickel-chrome is an alloy of nickel and chromium that was commonly used for trim pieces after World War II. It offers a slightly duller finish compared to pure chrome and is often identified by a subtle amber hue. Distinguishing genuine nickel-chrome from later chrome-plated reproductions requires careful visual comparison and, in some cases, metallurgical testing. The presence of original nickel-chrome can increase a vehicle’s value, especially on models where it was a factory-specified finish.

Plastic molding became prevalent in the 1950s as manufacturers sought lightweight, cost-effective alternatives to metal trim. Early plastics such as Bakelite, acrylic, and later ABS were molded into shapes for grilles, bumper guards, and interior panels. When evaluating plastic molding, appraisers examine color stability, surface cracking, and the integrity of the molding seams. Discoloration or yellowing is a common issue in vintage plastics, often caused by UV exposure. Restoration may involve careful cleaning with mild solvents, but aggressive polishing can damage the original surface.

Rubber weatherstripping is a flexible seal placed around doors, windows, and trunk openings to prevent water ingress and reduce wind noise. In classic cars, weatherstripping is typically made from natural rubber or early synthetic compounds. Over time, these materials become brittle, crack, or shrink, compromising the seal. A thorough assessment includes checking for gaps, tears, and the condition of the adhesive backing. Replacing weatherstripping with period-correct material is essential for maintaining both functionality and authenticity.

Door sills are the horizontal panels that run along the lower edge of a vehicle’s door opening. They are often finished in chrome, brass, or painted steel and may feature decorative embossing or lettering. For appraisal purposes, the condition of door sills is a key indicator of a car’s overall preservation. Look for dents, rust, and the integrity of the original finish. In many vintage models, the door sill also carries the manufacturer’s badge or model designation, which must be preserved or accurately replicated.

Grille is the front-facing component that allows airflow to the radiator while providing a distinctive visual identity. Grilles can be constructed from metal, plastic, or a combination of both, and may be adorned with chrome bars, mesh, or decorative inserts. When evaluating a grille, consider the alignment of the bars, the condition of the paint or plating, and any signs of replacement. Even a seemingly minor misalignment can indicate a non-original part, affecting the vehicle's provenance.

Hood ornament or bonnet mascot is a decorative figure or emblem mounted on the front of the hood. Common on luxury marques of the 1920s and 1930s, these ornaments are often cast in zinc, bronze, or chrome-plated metal. Condition assessment includes checking for missing fragments, patina consistency, and mounting hardware integrity. Original ornaments are highly collectible; reproductions, even if visually identical, are typically noted as "non-original" in appraisal reports.

Fender flares are extensions that increase the width of the wheel opening, often found on trucks and performance cars. They can be made from steel, aluminum, or fiberglass. Evaluating fender flares involves examining the fit to the wheel well, the continuity of the paint or finish, and any signs of structural repair. In some cases, owners replace original flares with wider aftermarket versions, which must be disclosed in the appraisal.

Side mirrors on vintage vehicles frequently feature chrome housings with glass or acrylic reflective surfaces. Early mirrors may have a brass base with a polished chrome finish. When inspecting side mirrors, verify the originality of the housing, the condition of the reflective element, and the functionality of the adjustment mechanism. Replacement mirrors, especially those with modern polymer housings, are considered a deviation from original specification.

Window frames are the metal or wooden structures that hold the glass panes in place. In many pre-war cars, the frames are composed of steel channels that are painted or chrome-plated. The condition of window frames is critical for both aesthetics and structural integrity. Look for rust, paint flaking, and any signs of reinforcement or reinforcement plates that may have been added during restoration. Original frames with minimal intervention are highly valued.

Windshield wipers on classic cars often use a mechanical linkage and rubber blades. The wiper arms themselves may be chrome or painted steel. Assess the condition of the pivot points, the wear of the rubber blades, and the compatibility with original blade designs. Some owners replace the original mechanical system with electric units; while this improves functionality, it must be noted as a modification.

Headlamp bezels are the surrounding rings that encircle the headlamp lenses. They can be chrome, polished steel, or painted metal. In many vintage models, the bezel also carries the vehicle's badge or emblem. Evaluation includes checking for dents, corrosion, and the presence of the original badge. A missing badge may be replaced with a replica; however, the authenticity of the original component should be documented.

Tail lamp housings protect the rear lights and are frequently finished in chrome or painted steel. In some models, the housings are integrated with the rear bumper. Condition assessment focuses on the integrity of the housing, the presence of original lenses, and any signs of repainting or repair. Replacement housings,

even if color-matched, are generally considered non-original.

Exhaust tip is the visible end of the exhaust system, often finished in chrome or stainless steel. The tip may be round, oval, or custom-shaped for a particular model. When appraising an exhaust tip, verify the material, the finish quality, and the attachment method to the exhaust pipe. Non-original tips, especially those with a modern polished finish, should be identified.

Chrome trim strips are narrow, decorative pieces applied along the edges of the body panels, such as the roofline, trunk lid, or around the windshield. These strips can be solid chrome or a combination of chrome and painted metal. Their condition is judged by the continuity of the strip, the presence of any gaps or misalignments, and the condition of the underlying adhesive or fasteners. Missing or replaced strips affect the vehicle's originality score.

Badge or emblem is a metal or enamel insignia that denotes the make, model, or year of the vehicle. Badges are often found on the grille, trunk lid, or interior dash. Original badges are typically attached by rivets or screws; replacements may be glued. For accurate appraisal, note the material (e.g., chrome, brass, enamel), the condition of the casting, and any signs of repainting or re-plating.

Interior trim encompasses all decorative and functional components within the passenger compartment. These elements contribute significantly to a vehicle's period character and are often the focus of collectors seeking authenticity.

Dashboard is the primary control panel located behind the steering wheel. In classic cars, dashboards were constructed from wood veneers, metal, or early plastics. The finish may be painted, polished, or covered with a fabric or leather overlay. When assessing a dashboard, examine the condition of the surface material, the integrity of the mounting brackets, and the functionality of any integrated gauges or switches. Cracks, warping, or mismatched repairs are common issues.

Instrument panel includes the gauges, switches, and indicator lights. Original gauges are usually metal with painted faces, while later models may have plastic lenses. Verification of originality involves checking for factory-specific markings, serial numbers, and the presence of original glass lenses. Replacement gauges, even if calibrated correctly, are considered a deviation from factory specification.

Steering column trim often features a metal or wooden shaft, sometimes wrapped in leather or vinyl. The finish may be chrome-plated or painted. Condition assessment includes checking for corrosion, the presence of original leather, and the integrity of the steering wheel attachment. In many restorations, the column is repainted; however, original finish details should be documented.

Seat upholstery refers to the fabric, leather, or vinyl covering of the seats. Early automobiles frequently used horsehair, wool, or canvas, while later models introduced synthetic leather. Evaluating upholstery involves inspecting for wear, fading, stitching integrity, and any signs of re-upholstering. Original upholstery, even if heavily worn, is highly prized; replacement materials must be noted as "non-original" even when they replicate the original pattern.

Headliner is the material that covers the interior roof of the vehicle. Commonly made from fabric stretched

over a backing board, headliners in vintage cars may be made of wool, cotton, or early synthetic blends. Over time, the fabric can sag, become stained, or detach from the board. A thorough assessment includes checking for delamination, water stains, and the presence of original stitching. Replacement headliners, especially those with modern synthetic materials, affect the vehicle's originality.

Door panels are the interior surfaces of the doors, often featuring wood grain finishes, metal inserts, or fabric coverings. In many pre-war cars, door panels were hand-crafted with veneer and chrome hardware. Condition appraisal looks for cracks in the veneer, rust on metal inserts, and the integrity of any original hardware such as door handles or latches. Re-paneling with modern materials must be disclosed.

Door handles can be chrome-plated metal, brass, or later plastic. Original handles often have distinct casting patterns or engravings unique to the manufacturer. When evaluating handles, verify the presence of original pins, the condition of the finish, and any signs of replacement. Non-original handles, even if aesthetically similar, are considered a modification.

Seat belt brackets are a later addition to many vintage cars for safety compliance. Original vehicles did not have seat belts; thus, the installation of brackets is a modern adaptation. Appraisers must note whether brackets are reversible, concealed, or overtly visible, as this can influence both safety compliance and historical integrity.

Floor mats are often made from woven fabric, carpet, or rubber. Original floor mats may bear the manufacturer's logo or pattern. When assessing, consider the material composition, wear pattern, and whether the mats are original or aftermarket replacements. Authentic mats that match the original design add to the vehicle's period feel.

Pedal assembly includes the accelerator, brake, and clutch pedals. In vintage cars, pedals were typically cast iron or steel with chrome or painted finishes. Condition evaluation includes checking for pedal wear, the presence of original bushings, and the integrity of the mounting brackets. Replacement pedal assemblies, especially those made from lightweight alloys, are considered non-original.

Kick plates are protective metal plates located at the lower front of the interior cabin, often finished in chrome or painted steel. They protect the interior from scuffs and may carry the vehicle's badge. When examining kick plates, look for dents, corrosion, and the condition of the original finish. Replacement plates, even if color-matched, must be identified as "non-original."

Window cranks are the mechanical devices used to raise and lower the windows. Early models used hand-cranked mechanisms made of steel or brass. The condition of the crank includes checking for smooth operation, rust, and the presence of original decorative elements such as chrome caps. Modern electric conversion kits are common but must be noted as a modification.

Ventilation louvers are adjustable openings that allow airflow into the cabin. In many vintage cars, louvers were made of metal with chrome or painted finishes. Assessment involves verifying the functionality of the adjustment mechanism, the condition of the finned metal, and any signs of corrosion. Replacement louvers, especially those made from plastic, affect originality.

Seat backs may feature wooden frames, metal brackets, or a combination of both. The backs often carry decorative stitching, embossing, or leather inserts. When evaluating seat backs, examine the structural integrity, any signs of reinforcement, and the condition of original upholstery. Modified seat backs, even with period-correct upholstery, are noted as alterations.

Center console in many classic cars is a simple wooden or metal tray that may house the gearshift lever. Original consoles often have a specific finish, such as polished wood or painted metal. Condition appraisal includes checking for scratches, finish wear, and the presence of original hardware such as knobs or switches.

Gearshift lever is often finished in chrome or steel and may have a wooden or metal knob. The lever's pivot points, bushings, and finish condition are critical for both functionality and originality. Wear on the lever, missing pins, or non-original knobs are all points of interest in a detailed assessment.

Instrument cluster is the assembly of gauges and warning lights that sit behind the steering wheel. Original clusters may have a specific layout, unique markings, and period-appropriate lighting (e.g., incandescent bulbs). When appraising, verify the authenticity of each gauge, the condition of the glass lenses, and any signs of retrofitting with modern LEDs.

Door window seals are similar to weatherstripping but specifically applied around the moving window frame. In vintage cars, these are often made of natural rubber. Condition checks include looking for cracks, hardening, and gaps that may allow water ingress. Replacement seals, especially those made from modern silicone, are considered a deviation from the original material.

Sun visor is a small hinged panel that can be raised to block sunlight. Early visors were often made from painted metal or early plastics. The finish, hinge condition, and any decorative embossing are points of evaluation. Replacement visors, even if historically styled, are noted as non-original.

Door hinges are critical structural components that must support the weight of the door while allowing smooth operation. In classic cars, hinges were commonly cast iron or steel with chrome plating. Assess for wear on the pivot points, rust, and the condition of the original finish. Over-tightened or replaced hinges can affect both the vehicle's appearance and its functional integrity.

Rear deck lid trim refers to the decorative molding that runs along the edge of the trunk lid. This trim may be chrome, painted steel, or wood veneer. Condition assessment includes checking for alignment, finish continuity, and any signs of repair. Original trim that matches the factory style enhances the vehicle's collectability.

Boot latch is the mechanism that secures the trunk or boot. In many vintage models, the latch is a metal lever with a chrome finish. When evaluating, look for the condition of the lever, the operation of the latch mechanism, and any signs of replacement. Original latches are preferred; replacements should be documented.

Rear window framing often consists of steel or aluminum channels that support the rear glass. The finish may be painted or chrome-plated. Condition checks include inspecting for rust, paint blistering, and the

integrity of the mounting points. Replacement frames, especially those fabricated from modern alloys, must be identified.

Wheel well liners in classic cars are sometimes made from felt or early rubberized fabrics. Their purpose is to protect the interior body panels from road debris. Assess for fraying, tearing, and any signs of water damage. Original liners, even if worn, are valuable for authenticity; aftermarket replacements should be noted.

Fuel filler cap is often a chrome-plated metal piece that may carry the manufacturer's emblem. The cap's condition includes checking for dents, corrosion, and the presence of the original gasket. Missing original caps are often replaced with generic caps; such substitutions must be recorded.

Radiator grille is a central component of the front fascia. In early automobiles, the grille may be a simple wooden slat, while later models feature intricate metal mesh. Condition assessment includes checking for alignment, rust, and the integrity of any decorative inserts. Original grilles are a major factor in determining originality.

Hood latch is the mechanism that secures the engine cover. In many vintage cars, the latch is a metal lever with a chrome finish. Examine the latch for wear, the condition of the pivot points, and any signs of replacement. Original latches, even if slightly corroded, are preferred over modern fasteners.

Front bumper trim may consist of chrome brackets, rubber guards, or painted steel. The trim's condition is assessed by checking for dents, cracks, and the continuity of the original finish. Replacement bumper guards, especially those made from modern polymers, are considered non-original.

Rear bumper trim similarly includes chrome or painted metal components. Condition evaluation focuses on the presence of original mounting brackets, the quality of the finish, and any signs of repair. Original bumper trim contributes significantly to a vehicle's period-correct appearance.

Side molding is the narrow strip that runs along the side of the car, often used to conceal seams between body panels. These can be chrome, painted, or wood-grain. When appraising side molding, check for proper alignment, surface continuity, and any signs of splicing. Replacement molding, even if color-matched, should be documented.

Windshield frame is the metal structure that holds the windshield in place. Early models used steel frames with a painted finish, while later cars may have chrome-plated frames. The condition of the frame includes checking for rust, paint loss, and the integrity of the sealing gasket. Original frames are essential for both aesthetics and structural safety.

Rear view mirror is typically a chrome-finished metal housing with a glass or acrylic mirror. Some models feature a pivoting mechanism that allows adjustment. When evaluating, verify the condition of the housing, the clarity of the mirror surface, and the functionality of the adjustment. Replacement mirrors, especially those with plastic housings, affect authenticity.

Horn button is a decorative element on the steering wheel or dash that activates the vehicle's horn. In many

vintage cars, the button is chrome-plated and may have a distinctive shape. Condition assessment includes checking for wear, the condition of the surrounding finish, and any signs of electrical modification. Original horn buttons are a small but notable detail.

Windscreen wiper arms are often chrome-plated steel components that connect the wiper blade to the motor. Examine for corrosion, the integrity of the pivot points, and any signs of replacement. Original wiper arms, even with worn rubber blades, are preferred.

Roof antenna in many classic cars is a chrome or brass mast that may be detachable. The antenna's condition includes checking for rust, the presence of original mounting hardware, and any signs of repair. Replacement antennas, especially those made from modern stainless steel, must be identified.

Interior door handles differ from exterior handles and are usually finished in chrome or painted metal. They may have a wooden or plastic backing. When assessing interior handles, verify the condition of the finish, the functionality of the latch, and any decorative embossing. Original interior handles are valuable for period authenticity.

Seat belt pivots are modern additions to meet safety regulations. In appraisal, note whether the pivots are installed in a reversible manner that allows removal without damage to the original interior. If the pivots are welded or permanently mounted, this constitutes a permanent alteration.

Dashboard trim panel often features a decorative molding that runs the length of the dash. This molding may be chrome, painted, or wood-grain. Condition assessment includes checking for alignment, the continuity of the finish, and any signs of repair. Replacement panels, even if visually identical, must be recorded.

Instrument illumination on vintage vehicles typically uses incandescent bulbs behind painted glass lenses. When evaluating illumination, verify that the original bulbs are present, assess the condition of the reflector surfaces, and note any modern retrofits such as LED conversions. While LED upgrades improve reliability, they represent a departure from original specification.

Steering wheel rim is often chrome-plated or painted metal with a leather or fabric grip. The rim's condition includes checking for cracks, corrosion, and the presence of original embossing or engraving. Replacement rims, particularly those made from modern alloys or with different patterns, affect the vehicle's originality.

Rear seat trim may include wooden panels, metal brackets, or fabric covers. Condition assessment focuses on the finish of the wood, any decorative inlays, and the integrity of the upholstery. Original rear seat trim contributes to the overall historical integrity of the interior.

Floor pan is the metal structure that forms the base of the passenger compartment. In vintage cars, floor pans are often stamped steel with a painted or chrome finish. When inspecting, look for rust, previous repairs, and the condition of any original protective coatings. Replacement floor pans, especially those fabricated from modern materials, must be documented.

Pedal box houses the accelerator, brake, and clutch pedals. It is typically made of stamped steel with a

painted finish. Condition assessment includes checking for rust, the integrity of the mounting brackets, and any signs of reinforcement. Original pedal boxes are preferred; aftermarket reinforcement plates should be noted.

Gearshift boot is a protective cover over the gear lever. In many classic cars, the boot is made of leather or canvas. When evaluating, examine the material for tears, fading, and the condition of the stitching. Replacement boots, even if made from period-correct leather, must be identified as non-original.

Center console trim may feature chrome or painted metal accents. The condition of these accents includes checking for chips, corrosion, and the presence of original fasteners. Replacement trim pieces, especially those fabricated from modern materials, affect the vehicle's authenticity.

Seatbelt latch is a modern safety component. When installed, assess its visibility, the method of attachment, and whether it can be removed without damaging the original interior. Documentation of the latch's presence is essential for a complete appraisal.

Side window crank is a small metal lever used to raise or lower the side windows. The crank's condition includes checking for rust, the smoothness of operation, and the presence of any original decorative caps. Replacement cranks, especially those made from plastic, must be noted.

Roof molding is a decorative strip that runs along the edge of the roof. It may be chrome-plated or painted metal. Condition assessment includes checking for continuity, alignment, and any signs of repair. Original roof molding enhances the vehicle's period authenticity.

Rear window wiper is a less common feature but appears on some vintage models. It typically consists of a small chrome arm with a rubber blade. When assessing, verify the condition of the arm, the wear of the blade, and the functionality of the motor (if present). Replacement units, even if functional, are considered alterations.

Tail light lenses may be made of glass or early acrylic. Original lenses often have a slight amber tint. Condition assessment includes checking for cracks, clouding, and the presence of original paint markings. Replacement lenses, especially those made from modern polycarbonate, must be identified.

Headlamp lenses are similar to tail light lenses but may also include reflective coatings. When evaluating, look for scratches, yellowing, and any signs of refacing. Original lenses, even if slightly cloudy, are valued for authenticity; refaced lenses are noted as modifications.

Boot seal is the rubber gasket that prevents water ingress into the trunk. Condition includes checking for cracking, hardening, and gaps. Replacement seals, especially those made from silicone, should be documented.

Fuel tank filler pipe is a metal tube that guides fuel into the tank. It may be chrome-plated or painted. The condition assessment involves checking for corrosion, the integrity of the threading, and any signs of repair. Original filler pipes are a detail rarely altered but important for a complete appraisal.

Radiator cap often carries the manufacturer's logo and may be finished in chrome. When assessing, verify

the condition of the finish, the presence of the original gasket, and the functional integrity of the pressure release valve. Replacement caps, even if identical in appearance, are noted as non-original.

Exhaust pipe hangers are metal brackets that support the exhaust system. Condition checks include looking for rust, the integrity of the mounting points, and any signs of reinforcement. Original hangers are preferred; aftermarket brackets should be identified.

Brake drum retainers are metal clips that hold the brake drums in place. In vintage cars, these are often chrome-plated. Condition assessment includes checking for cracks, corrosion, and the presence of original fasteners. Replacement retainers, especially those made from lighter alloys, must be documented.

Horn housing is a metal enclosure that contains the horn mechanism. It may be chrome-plated and carry decorative embossing. When evaluating, verify the condition of the finish, the presence of original mounting hardware, and any signs of modification. Original horn housings contribute to the overall authenticity of the vehicle.

Dashboard gauges may include speedometer, tachometer, oil pressure, and temperature indicators. Each gauge's condition is assessed for glass clarity, needle movement, and the integrity of the face markings. Original gauges, even with slight wear, are highly valued; modern digital replacements must be recorded as alterations.

Steering column boot is a protective cover for the steering shaft. It may be made of leather, fabric, or early plastics. Condition assessment includes checking for cracks, fading, and the presence of original stitching. Replacement boots, especially those made from modern synthetic materials, affect authenticity.

Door window regulators are the mechanisms that raise and lower the windows. In many vintage cars, these are manual rack-type regulators made of steel. When inspecting, verify the smoothness of operation, the condition of the metal links, and any signs of repair or replacement. Modern electric regulators are a significant modification.

Interior trim molding may consist of narrow chrome strips that run along the edges of the dashboard, door panels, and center console. Condition assessment focuses on alignment, the continuity of the finish, and any gaps that indicate missing or replaced sections. Original molding contributes to a cohesive period interior.

Seatbelt buckle is a modern safety component. Its installation should be reversible if possible. When present, note the style of the buckle (e.g., "standard automatic" or "manual latch"), its material (typically steel or alloy), and any impact on the original seat upholstery.

Window glass in vintage cars may be single-pane, laminated, or, in some cases, early safety glass. Original glass often has a slight distortion or "waviness" that is characteristic of the era. When assessing, check for cracks, chips, and the condition of the surrounding seal. Replacement glass, especially if double-pane, must be documented.

Rear window glass may be a single piece or split into two halves. The condition includes examining for any cracks, the presence of original tint, and the integrity of the mounting hardware. Original rear glass, even if

slightly warped, is preferred over modern replacements.

Side window glass is often set in a metal frame with rubber gaskets. Condition assessment includes checking for scratches, chips, and the quality of the rubber seal. Replacement glass, even if correctly tinted, should be recorded.

Roof rack is an accessory that may be original to some models, particularly convertibles or touring cars. When present, evaluate the material (often steel or chrome), the condition of the mounting points, and any signs of rust. Non-original racks, especially those added for modern utility, must be noted.

Windshield washer nozzle is a small brass or chrome component that sprays water onto the windshield. Condition includes checking for corrosion, blockage, and original mounting hardware. Replacement nozzles, particularly those made from plastic, are considered modifications.

Rear windshield wiper is less common but appears on certain models. It consists of a small motor, arm, and blade. When evaluating, verify the condition of the motor, the integrity of the arm, and the wear of the blade. Replacement units, even if functional, are a deviation from the original equipment.

Door hinges are critical to the structural integrity of the door assembly. In many vintage cars, hinges are cast iron or steel with a chrome finish. When inspecting, look for wear on the pivot points, rust, and any signs of reinforcement. Replacement hinges, especially those made from modern alloys, must be documented.

Door latch mechanisms may be mechanical rods or early hydraulic devices. Condition assessment includes checking for smooth operation, corrosion, and the presence of original springs. Replacement latches, even if period-styled, are noted as alterations.

Side marker lights are small lamps positioned on the side of the vehicle to indicate width and presence. In early models, they may be glass lenses with chrome housings. When evaluating, verify the condition of the housing, the functionality of the lamp, and any signs of replacement. Modern LED replacements should be recorded.

Fuel gauge is often an analog needle gauge mounted on the dash. Condition includes checking for accurate operation, the integrity of the needle, and the condition of the face markings. Original gauges, even if slightly faded, are valued over modern digital replacements.

Temperature gauge works similarly to the fuel gauge and is assessed for accuracy, needle movement, and face condition. Original gauges are preferred; electronic replacements must be noted.

Odometer is a mechanical device that records mileage. In vintage cars, the odometer may be integrated with the speedometer or separate. Condition assessment includes checking for accurate counting, the integrity of the numbers, and any signs of tampering. Replacement odometers, especially those with digital displays, significantly affect authenticity.

Steering column shaft is a metal rod that connects the steering wheel to the steering mechanism. It may be finished in chrome or painted. Condition includes checking for straightness, rust, and the presence of

original mounting hardware. Replacement shafts, especially those made from lightweight alloys, must be documented.

Horn relay is an electrical component that activates the horn. In many vintage cars, the horn relay is a simple metal switch. When evaluating, verify the condition of the contacts, the presence of original wiring, and any signs of modern upgrades. Upgraded relays are noted as modifications.

Instrument panel padding may be a layer of felt or fabric that sits behind the gauges. Condition assessment includes checking for moisture damage, compression, and any signs of repair. Original padding, even if compressed, is preferred over modern synthetic replacements.

Dashboard switches include the ignition switch, light switch, and other control knobs. Condition includes checking for proper operation, the integrity of the contacts, and the finish of the knobs. Original switches, even if worn, are valued; aftermarket switches must be recorded.

Steering column boot protects the steering shaft from dust and debris. It may be made of leather or early synthetic material. Condition assessment includes checking for cracks, fading, and the presence of original stitching. Replacement boots, especially those made from modern vinyl, affect authenticity.

Seat belt anchor points are structural reinforcements installed to secure seat belts. In vintage vehicles, these are often added to the chassis or door frames. When present, note the material, the method of installation (e.g., welded versus bolted), and whether they are reversible.

Rear seat belt latch is a modern safety addition. Its installation should be documented, including any modifications required to the original seat structure.

Side panel trim may include decorative metal strips, wood veneers, or painted panels. Condition assessment includes checking for alignment, surface finish, and any signs of repair. Original side panel trim is a significant factor in the overall authenticity of the vehicle.

Rear window defroster is a heating element embedded in the rear glass. In many vintage models, this feature is absent, but later retrofits may be installed. When present, evaluate the condition of the heating wires, the integrity of the glass, and the functionality of the control switch. Retrofits must be noted.

Interior lighting includes dome lights, map lights, and footwell illumination. Original fixtures may be chrome-plated or painted metal with glass lenses. Assess the condition of the housing, the clarity of the lenses, and the functionality of the bulbs. Replacement fixtures, especially those with modern LED modules, are considered modifications.

Door lock mechanisms may be manual key locks or early automatic locks. Condition includes checking for smooth operation, rust, and the presence of original key cylinders. Replacement lock mechanisms, even if period-styled, must be documented.

Window regulator cables are steel cables that operate the windows. In many vintage cars, these cables are housed in metal tubes. Condition assessment includes checking for fraying, corrosion, and proper tension. Replacement cables, especially those made from modern synthetic rope, should be noted.

Boot latch lever is a metal lever that secures the trunk. Condition includes checking for wear, rust, and the integrity of the original finish. Replacement levers, particularly those made from plastic, affect the vehicle's originality.

Rear bumper brackets are metal supports that attach the bumper to the chassis. Condition assessment includes checking for rust, the continuity of the original finish, and any signs of reinforcement. Replacement brackets, especially those fabricated from modern alloys, must be recorded.

Side step is a decorative and functional element that runs along the side of the vehicle, often found on larger cars and trucks. It may be made of steel, aluminum, or wood. When evaluating a side step, check for structural integrity, surface finish, and any signs of rust or repair.

Roof seal is the gasket that prevents water ingress between the roof and the body panels. Condition includes checking for cracks, compression set, and any signs of water damage. Replacement seals, especially those made from modern silicone, should be noted.

Door seal is similar to the roof seal but located around the door frame. Condition assessment includes checking for gaps, hardness, and signs of deterioration. Original rubber seals, even if slightly hardened, are preferred over modern replacements.

Rear seat upholstery may be fabric, leather, or vinyl. When assessing, examine the condition of the stitching, the presence of original patterns, and any signs of reupholstering. Original upholstery, despite wear, adds to the vehicle's historical value.

Floor carpet is a woven fabric that covers the floor of the passenger compartment. Condition includes checking for stains, wear, and any signs of replacement. Original carpet, especially if it matches the period-specific pattern, is valuable.

Rear quarter panel trim may include chrome strips, painted metal, or wood veneers. Condition assessment includes checking for alignment, surface continuity, and any signs of repair. Original trim pieces contribute significantly to the vehicle's overall exterior authenticity.

Side window trim is a narrow strip that frames the side windows. It may be chrome-plated or painted. When evaluating, check for proper fit, the continuity of the finish, and any gaps that indicate missing sections. Replacement trim, even if color-matched, must be documented.

Engine bay trim includes protective covers and decorative panels within the engine compartment. These may be painted metal or chrome-plated. Condition assessment includes checking for rust, paint flaking, and any signs of modification. Original engine bay trim is a subtle but important detail.

Radiator support is a structural element that holds the radiator in place. It may be painted or chrome-finished. When assessing, verify the integrity of the mounting points, the condition of the finish, and any signs of reinforcement.