Cupola’s and Widow Walks are obsolete structures that are no longer used in today’s homes. The Victorian homes that were built between the 1880’s to the 1920’s had Cupola’s and Widow Walks for vertical ventilation. Both the Cupola’s and Widow Walks were at the highest vertical points of the home and had an access opening for a person to gain entrance. So, during the hot summer days as heat would rise, the access port to the Cupola’s and Widow’s Walk was a good way to ventilate your Victorian home and keep it as cool as possible.

Cupola’s were decorative square or rectangular shape wooden covered structures that were perched on top of the roofs of the Victorian homes, with an interior stairway. Cupola’s had the tomb stone shaped window openings with window glass and or venting slots that would direct the rain down and away from the interior. Some Cupola’s had the carriage house’s pavilion hip roof with tapered cedar shingles. The window openings would have proportionately spaced paired and or single arched louvered shutters and or windows, with the finely detailed dentil and scroll wooden trim work around the windows and the base of the Cupola’s roof.

One can still see the modern use of the decorative Cupola’s on top of garages today. These Cupola’s are small and do not have an entrance for a person to gain access to these cupola’s. These Cupola’s are just for decoration.

Cupola’s in the Victorian age were built with an interior-stairways so that one may walk up to the cupola to site see and or to cool off while enjoying a summer breeze. Some Cupola’s have Widow’s Walk that surround them. Some Cupola’s do not have a Widow’s Walk. Some Victorian home only have a Widow’s Walk, without any Cupola.

A Widow’s Walk is just a flat area on top of the highest point of the roof, with a decorative fence type railing around the perimeter of the Widow’s Walk. The Widow’s Walk also have an interior entrance from inside the Victorian home with a rain proof door way to access the Widow’s Walk. The name Widow’s Walk comes from the belief that the wife who was left behind at home, would use the Widow’s Walk to watch for their husband to return from his travel and trips out to the sea. For the unlucky wife who would wait for her husband who would never return home, so there forth the Window’s Walk has obtained its name.