



## HISTORIC DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

### HISTORIC BUILDING BRIEF No. 3

# Exterior Materials

#### General Guidelines

- Properly maintained, wood siding outperforms wood substitutes and is the best choice.
- Cement fiber planks are a good choice for new additions or construction.
- Paint and most roofing materials are intended to be replaced periodically and therefore more flexibility can be given for substitute colors and materials.

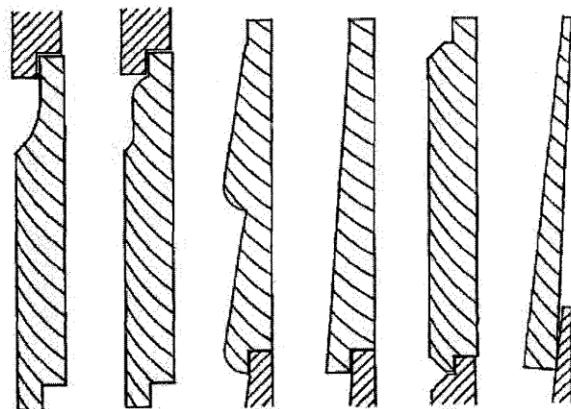


#### History

- Horizontal wood siding and shingles were the most common exterior wall materials.
- Wood was used because of its abundance in the region and ease of shaping.
- The first wood siding was split clapboards, then sawn clapboards. By the early 1900s various patterns were made in a variety of profiles often called drop, rustic, or novelty siding.
- Several Victorian-era architectural styles used wood shingles sawn in various patterns such as octagonal and diamond patterns.
- Mineral fiber (asbestos) shingles were common in the 1930s and 40s and were a fairly durable, maintenance free siding.

#### Siding Types

- Wood siding, both historically and today, is typically made from cedar or fir and installed with common nails. It is the most durable siding – color is easily changed; blemishes can be sanded or filled.
- Brick should not be painted.
- Mineral fiber shingles can be painted but break easily.
- Installation of vinyl, metal or mineral fiber siding often requires removal of original decorative elements such as cornices, brackets, and window trim.
- Vinyl and metal is the least flexible material. It cannot be repaired, painted or replaced in small sections. Vinyl warps and cracks over time. Metal easily shows imprint from tossed baseballs or lawn mower rocks.
- Cement fiber siding products are durable, can be painted and often mimic original wood siding. If used, smooth-faced planks are most compatible with historic buildings. Wood-textured planks or panels do not mimic historic wood siding as it was always milled smooth. Large panels of fiber siding do not have adequate shadow lines and leave inappropriate joint lines.



#### Maintenance

- Check regularly for loose bricks or deteriorated mortar – tuck pointing may be required.
- Previously unpainted brick should not be painted, it encourages deterioration and hides subtle color and texture differences. If brick has been painted, the best color choice for repainting is one that matches original color of the brick.

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- Maintain regular paint schedule and replace damaged or rotten boards as soon as discovered. Flaking or badly adhered paint should be removed. Oil-based primers are best for old wood.
- Appropriate methods for paint removal are scraping, sanding, thermal and mild chemical strippers.
- Inappropriate methods are sandblasting, high pressure power washing, blow torch, or abrasive cleaning and stripping. These usually cause permanent damage to siding materials.
- Vinyl and metal siding often traps moisture resulting in hidden damage to walls. If vinyl or metal is damaged it usually requires replacement of entire wall and occasionally entire building.

## Paint Colors

- Italianate and Queen Anne style houses were typically painted in multi-color schemes in deep rich hues. Three to four colors were used, sometimes with each floor or material a different color. The base was usually darkest, with lighter colors on top. Window sash were often black or dark red.
- Colonial Revival houses were typically light color (gray, yellow or tan) trimmed with white or cream. Window sashes were often painted black or dark green.
- Craftsman houses were usually painted in warm, rich earth tones. Wood siding or shingles were often stained dark brown or green. Trim was lighter, often ivory, tan or cream. Window sashes varied greatly, and were red, black or the trim color.
- Tudor/Mission/Spanish Revival houses had light walls with contrasting trim colors and red tile for Mission and Spanish Revival roofs.
- Historic paint colors should be documented through paint analysis if possible.

## Roofing

- Most houses were originally roofed with wood shakes/shingles from old-growth trees and lasted many years. Modern shakes/shingles have much shorter life span.
- City does not allow wood shakes/shingles due to fire danger in region.
- Slate shingles are durable and have a long life span, but were not commonly used during historic period. Should only be used on buildings that had them historically.
- High style metal shingles and standing seam roofs are durable and have long life span, but were also not commonly used historically. Corrugated metal panels were common on outbuildings beginning in 1920s. They're utilitarian and should be used on secondary buildings.
- Standing seam metal roofs are not appropriate. The minimal texture and bright colors look out of place in historic neighborhoods.
- Asphalt or composition shingles became common in the 1930s. Modern, architectural style asphalt shingles are better solutions in historic districts than the flat, three tab shingles, as they more closely mimic historic wood shakes/shingles.

## Additional Reading

- National Park Service Preservation Briefs
  - No. 8: Aluminum/Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings, [www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief08.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief08.htm)
  - No. 10: Exterior Paint Problems on Woodwork, [www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief10.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief10.htm)
- Wood Guidelines, [http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/restore/restore\\_wood.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/restore/restore_wood.htm)
- Siding Profiles, <http://www.wwpa.org/patterns/sections/g16.pdf>

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Third in a series of educational briefs to encourage successful rehabilitation of Ashland's historic buildings. For additional briefs contact: