

## **MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF WOOD SHINGLES, CLAPBOARDS, AND OTHER WOOD SIDINGS**

If a building's shingles, clapboards, and other wood sidings were previously painted or stained, a property owner routinely should have them repainted or re-stained. Gaps between boards or shingles need to be caulked. Cracks and splits in the exterior wood cladding should be repaired before repainting or re-staining. If deterioration is more extensive, remove damaged materials and replace in-kind by piecing-in new matching wood cladding. Only replace materials that cannot be repaired. Rarely does all the exterior cladding of a building need replacement. The infill replacement materials should be painted or stained to match the original.



*The unpainted shingles of this house are a character-defining feature.*

## GUIDELINES FOR SHINGLES, CLAPBOARDS, AND OTHER SIDINGS



**Recommended:** Retain, maintain, and repair historic exterior cladding such as this wood clapboard.

Original exterior shingles, clapboards, or other siding covering the exterior walls of a building are character defining architectural features. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Closter's frame buildings were typically covered with wood clapboards or shingles. These materials not only enclosed the buildings from the weather, but contributed to their historic architectural interest by providing texture, scale, proportion, color, and horizontal and vertical accents. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century frame buildings frequently mixed a number of different wood exterior cladding materials, including shingles of differing shapes installed in decorative patterns. With proper maintenance, historic wood cladding can last for centuries.

Since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century some of Closter's historic buildings have been resurfaced with synthetic materials such as asphalt roll siding, asbestos shingles, aluminum siding, and vinyl siding. These synthetic materials can significantly change a building's character and appearance, especially when they do not replicate the design features of the original cladding. While usually installed to reduce maintenance, replacement vinyl and aluminum sidings are not always maintenance free. These synthetic sidings can trap moisture within the buildings' walls and accelerate rot and decay. They can hide deterioration so that damage progresses to a serious condition before being noticed.

A Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A) is required for the replacement of exterior cladding with a different material or any other change to shingles, clapboards, or other siding that results in a change in the exterior appearance of a Landmark and of buildings and structures within a Landmark District. A C/A is not required for repainting or

re-staining exterior cladding, but is required for painting or staining previously unpainted or unstained historic exterior surfaces and for any sandblasting. The maintenance, repair, or replacement *in-kind*\* of existing shingles, clapboards, or other siding using the same materials that are being repaired or maintained does not require a C/A.

### GUIDELINES

*Identify, retain, and maintain historic shingles, clapboards, and other sidings.*

*Repair rather than replace deteriorated historic materials. Generally limit repairs to the deteriorated areas and use techniques appropriate to the materials.*

*For necessary replacements, match the historic materials and features in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.*



**Recommended:** Repaint previously painted historic exterior cladding such as these wood shingles.

### For Landmarks and Key Contributing and Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts

#### RECOMMENDED

- Retain, maintain, and repair original exterior buildings materials. Conduct semiannual inspections of exterior cladding. When materials are deteriorated, determine and correct the cause of the deterioration before repairing the materials. Remove deteriorated paint using the gentlest means possible. Repaint or re-stain previously painted or stained exterior cladding when needed.

\* Words and phrases followed by \* are defined in "Definitions and Abbreviations" in the *Appendix*

## For Landmarks and Key Contributing and Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts

### RECOMMENDED CONTINUED

- Repair or do selective replacement of historic wood cladding instead of covering with synthetic materials. Often deterioration is limited and historic materials can be repaired or only partially replaced. Replacement cladding should have the same visual characteristics of the historic material, including size, dimensions, exposure (overlap), color, and texture.
- When original materials have been altered or replaced, property owners may repair and replace with materials similar to the materials present or with materials compatible with the historic architecture. They are encouraged to replace with materials similar to the historic originals. If the original material is covered by later materials, consider removing these alterations and maintaining and repairing the original material.
- The removal of synthetic exterior cladding that encapsulates original decorative features is particularly recommended.
- If the repair and preservation of the historic cladding is not possible, property owners are encouraged to install wood cladding that matches the original in size, dimensions, pattern, exposure (overlap), and texture.
- When considering using substitute materials, investigate the advantages and disadvantages of wood versus the various synthetic sidings and learn about the proper installation of replacement sidings by consulting the technical assistance information including in the *Resources for Exterior Cladding* box in this chapter.
- If wood cladding is not feasible, the property owner can install fiber-cement or vinyl siding or shingles in a manner that minimizes the damage to historic materials and matches the visual characteristics of the historic materials. Original decorative features such as window and door frames, cornices, porch posts, and

brackets should not be removed or covered. The replacement siding should replicate the original size, dimensions, exposure (overlap), color, and texture, including the decorative patterns of shingles and the presence of corner boards and other exterior trim. The siding needs to be installed so that historic wood trim maintains its projection from the wall surface and colors and placement are compatible with the historic architecture. Before the new siding is installed, the property owner should do maintenance and make repairs so that the new siding will not conceal future problems. Decorative exterior woodwork should be repaired and painted. Nailing into decorative features should be minimized.

- Wood or fiber-cement siding or shingles which resemble the historic exterior cladding are the most acceptable exterior cladding materials for new additions, but other materials may be considered if they are compatible.

### NOT RECOMMENDED

- Sandblasting wood cladding.
- Removing, changing, or covering exterior materials that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.
- Removing or encapsulating decorative features such as cornices, eaves, window trim, brackets, and porch posts and railings during installation of new cladding.
- Newly installing aluminum siding or synthetic stucco (Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems, E.I.F.S)
- Using vinyl siding that has embossed wood graining because this exaggerated graining is not a characteristic of real wood cladding.

## For Non-Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts

### RECOMMENDED

- Use exterior siding materials that are visually consistent with the historic materials in the streetscape and district. Synthetic materials may be used.



**Not Recommended:** Using synthetic siding with embossed wood graining.

### RESOURCES FOR EXTERIOR CLADDINGS

Hopewell, New Jersey, Historic Preservation Commission, *Design Guidelines: Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance, Exterior Woodwork*, <http://208.55.240.96/Guidelines-Historic-Properties.html>

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 8: Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/briefo8.htm>

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 10: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief10.htm>

### ISSUES RELATED TO WOOD CLADDINGS AND SYNTHETIC SIDINGS

Vinyl and aluminum siding can trap moisture inside the walls of an older frame building and accelerate rot and decay and cause costly structural repairs. To prevent this, continuous wall vents under eaves and weep holes need to be installed in vinyl and aluminum siding. Aluminum and vinyl sidings can hide problems, such as water penetration, and allow them to go uncorrected until that they become expensive major repairs.

The energy conservation benefits of synthetic sidings are overrated. Studies show that 75% of a building's heat loss is through the roof. Installing attic insulation is a far more cost effective method of reducing heat loss than is installing synthetic siding.

While synthetic siding is marketed as being maintenance free, it is not the case. Both vinyl and aluminum sidings need regular cleaning. Vinyl siding may crack if hit, especially during cold weather, and it may be punctured. Aluminum siding can puncture, dent, warp, cup, peel, and/or fade. The colors of both vinyl and aluminum siding fade. It is difficult to match colors for selective replacement due to fading. Painting the synthetic siding may void manufacturers' warranties. Once painted, synthetic siding needs to be repainted as often as wood. Wood cladding can also be damaged, but it is considerably easier to repair and repairs to wood after painting are usually unnoticeable.

Vinyl and aluminum siding appear thinner and visually lighter than wood. This is particularly the case with aluminum siding. Often it is not possible to match with synthetic materials the visual appearance of the historic wood shingles, clapboards, or other cladding.

If there is a fire, the fumes from vinyl can be hazardous. Fires in aluminum-sided buildings often are more difficult to extinguish than in wood-clad buildings.

Fiber-cement siding (Hardiplank and other brands) is a close visual match to wood. It is manufactured in a wide range of sizes and shapes and can look like clapboard or even decorative shingles. It can be cut with hand tools and painted.

Wood claddings can last hundreds of years. Vinyl siding usually has a 20 year guarantee. Some manufacturers' warranties guarantee fiber-cement siding for 50 years.

Typically vinyl and aluminum siding cost less than fiber-cement siding. Fiber-cement siding costs less than wood claddings. Often partial replacement of wood cladding can correct a problem in a less costly manner than replacing all the exterior cladding material.