Siding and Trim

Design Guidelines

SD1 Do not replace missing wood features with conjectural or falsely-historic reconstructions or with newly-designed elements that are incompatible with the building's size, scale, material, or color.

SD2 Photographically document architectural features that are slated for reconstruction prior to the removal of any historic fabric.

SD3 Consider using contemporary wood siding, which conveys the visual appearance of historic siding, when replacement of such materials is required.

SD4 Do not use textured plywood (T-111) vertical siding. It is not an appropriate substitute material.

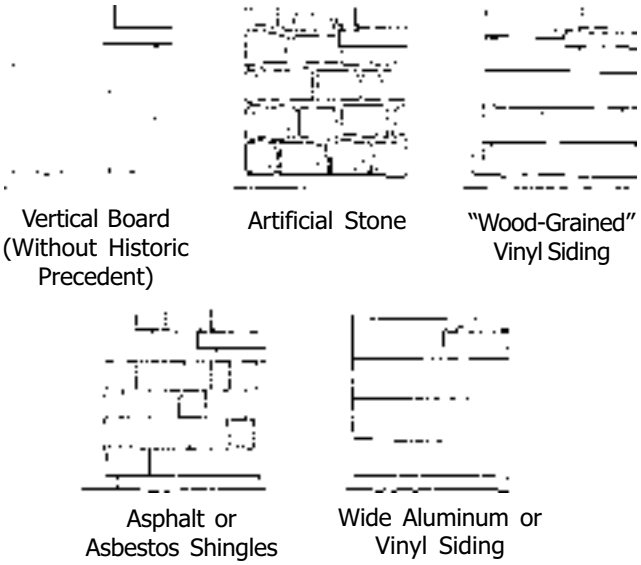
Common Siding Types

Beveled Siding

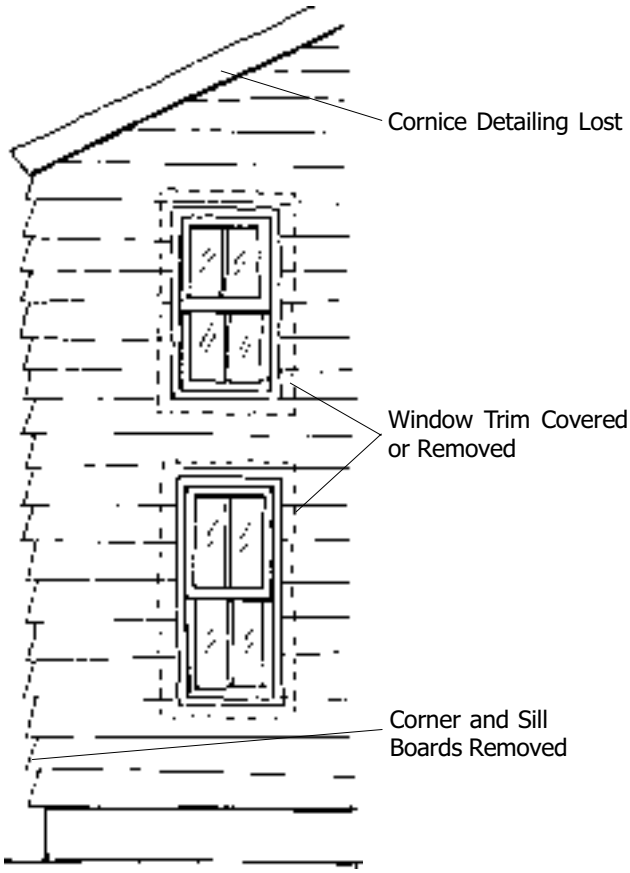
Drop Siding

Shiplap Siding

Inappropriate Replacement Siding Types



Installation of Replacement Siding Should Not Obscure or Damage Historic Trim



Inappropriate siding installation diminishes historic character.

Siding and Trim Convey Architectural Character

Three tiers of elaborate and dramatic wood trim seen in the porches, the tower, and the gable express the Queen Anne-character of this house.

Rectilinear wood cladding and window and door trim combine to give this Italianate house a formal, geometric appearance.

SD5 Do not install artificial stone, asbestos shingles, or asphalt shingles over or as a replacement for exterior siding.

SD6 Orient all replacement siding horizontally, unless there is sound, historic documentation for a different original orientation.

SD7 Do not install vinyl or aluminum siding on primary elevations on historic buildings. Retention of exposed original wood siding is always preferred; however, if a decision is made to apply siding to side and rear elevations, it should be done in a way that does not obscure or damage historic ornament, such as fishscale

Avoid the Boxy Look

If done thoughtlessly, the application of vinyl siding can obscure historic proportion and detail.

If you must use vinyl siding, limit it to the side and rear elevations as shown above and retain character-defining architectural features.

Look Up!

Gable ends are often backdrops for lavish and creative displays of ornamental woodwork.

Paint as Needed

Coating systems are critical for the preservation of wood features. If left unaddressed, paint failure can lead to serious deterioration.

shingles, window casings, sills, hoods, brackets, and cornerboards.

SD8 Use only vinyl or aluminum siding that matches the dimensions of the original siding. Generally, smooth-faced, narrow-profile siding (3" or 4" depending on the character of the existing siding) is acceptable for installation on secondary elevations. Wherever possible without causing damage to historic fabric, trim, such as cornerboards, should project slightly beyond the vinyl siding.

SD9 Make sure that removal, handling, and disposal of lead-containing paint complies with all local, state, and federal standards.

SD10 Do not remove exterior siding to install insulation within the exterior walls of historic wood frame construction. This can result in damage to historic fabric. Installation of insulation with a proper vapor barrier should be done from the interior.

Wood Siding and Trim Play Important Supporting Roles

Compare the houses above and below. Their designs are the same, but trim and siding replacement has altered their character. Above, the house retains historic porch elements, but has lost its clapboard and shake siding.

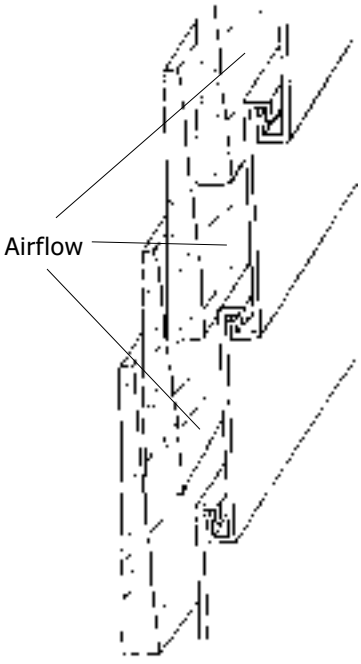
Check Your Windows

Long-term exposure to the elements can damage historic wood windows and their trim. Windows are important character-defining features, so check their condition regularly and address any problems before they become serious.

Replacements Should Match the Original

Above, the house retains it original siding, but its porch elements have been replaced by inappropriate substitutes that do not match the visual appearance of the original.

With Vinyl Siding Must Come Ventilation



Where vinyl siding is approved, airflow between historic siding and vinyl siding must be maintained, or moisture can cause unseen structural deterioration.