SIDING & TRIM
DESIGN GUIDELINES

The building material used on a historic structure contributes significantly to the character of the building. Wood siding and trim are common in many of Louisville's preservation districts, and they help convey architectural character. Due to its importance to maintaining historic character, wood siding and trim should be maintained and preserved wherever possible. If repair is unfeasible, a replacement should match the characteristics of the original material as closely as possible.

Original Siding and Trim

The preservation of original wood siding and trim is essential to maintaining the character of the historic structure. Regular maintenance checks help prevent major deterioration of siding and trim, and are especially important for trim around wood windows.

SD.1 Preserve original siding and trim.

- » Repair deteriorated siding and trim by patching, piecing in, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the material.
- » Remove only the material that is deteriorated and beyond reasonable repair.
- » Consider the use of blown-in insulation that follows appropriate procedures to respect original siding.
- » Do not remove an original material that is in good condition.
- » Do not remove original exterior siding to install insulation within the exterior walls of historic wood frame construction.
- » Do not cover original wood siding or trim.

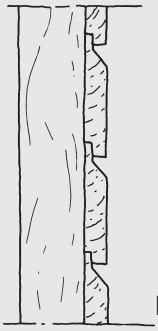
SD.2 Restore the visibility of a covered, original historic material.

- » Consider removing a later covering material that has not achieved historic significance.
- » Once a non-historic siding is removed, repair the original, underlying material.

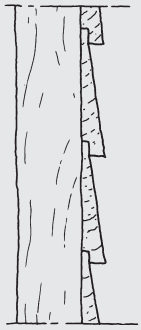
Preserve original siding and trim. Siding and trim convey architectural character and are important components of a historic building. In the top photo, three tiers of elaborate and dramatic wood trim seen in the porches, the tower, and the gable express the Queen Anne-character of this house. The bottom photo shows rectilinear wood cladding and trim that give the Italianate house a formal, geometric appearance.

Common Siding Types

Beveled Siding



Drop Siding



Shiplap Siding

Replacement Siding and Trim

Replacement of original siding and trim should only be considered when the repair of an original material is unfeasible. The replacement of original siding should be done with care, as the thoughtless application of new siding or trim material can obscure historic proportion and detail. This process should also be done with care as historic wood siding and trim could contain lead-based paint. Check the local, state, and federal standards regarding the removal, handling, and disposal of lead-containing paint prior to beginning a project.

SD.3 Use an original material to replace damaged materials on a primary elevation wherever possible.

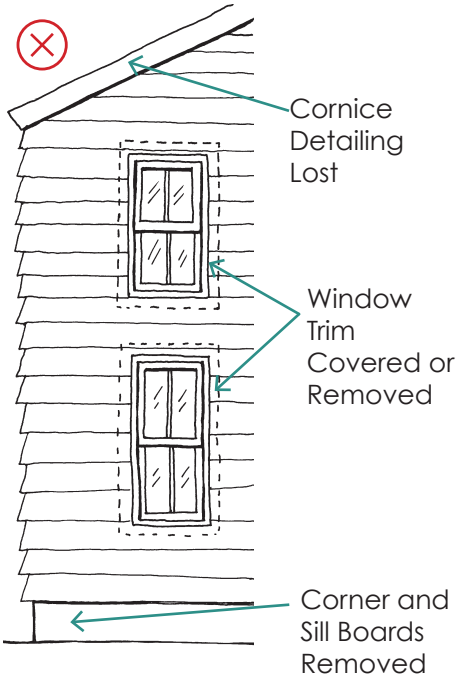
- Use an original material from a secondary elevation to replace a damaged building material on a primary elevation, if possible.
- If original material is not available from the site, use a replacement material that is visually compatible with the original material in texture, profile, depth, finish, etc. Consider using contemporary wood siding when replacement is required.
- Do not replace a missing wood feature with falsely-historic reconstructions or with newly-designed elements that are incompatible.

Restore the visibility of an original historic material that has been covered.

Preserve original siding and trim. Windows and their surrounding trim are important character-defining features. Performing regular inspection of their condition is important to ensure any problems due to weather exposure are addressed.

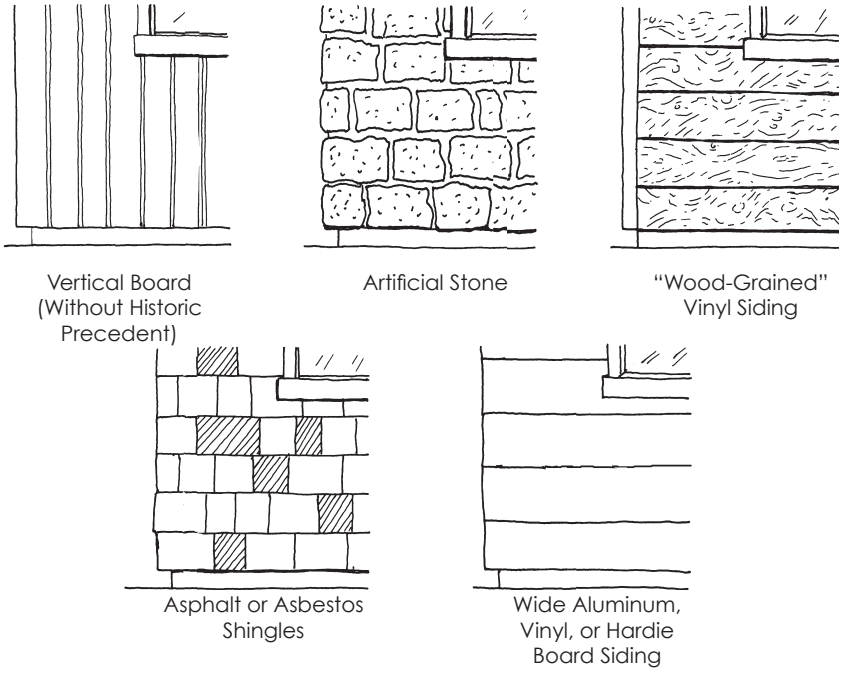
SD.4 When replacing a material on a non-primary facade or elevation, match the original material in composition, scale, and finish.

- » Use an original material to replace a damaged material on a non-primary facade when possible.
- » Install replacement siding in a way that does not obscure or damage historic ornament such as fishscale shingles, window casings, sills, hoods, brackets, and cornerboards.
- » Orient all replacement siding horizontally, unless there is sound, historic documentation for a different original orientation.
- » If vinyl or aluminum siding is considered as a replacement material, use a dimension that matches the original siding.
- » Historic fabric, such as trim and cornerboard, should project slightly beyond the vinyl siding wherever possible.

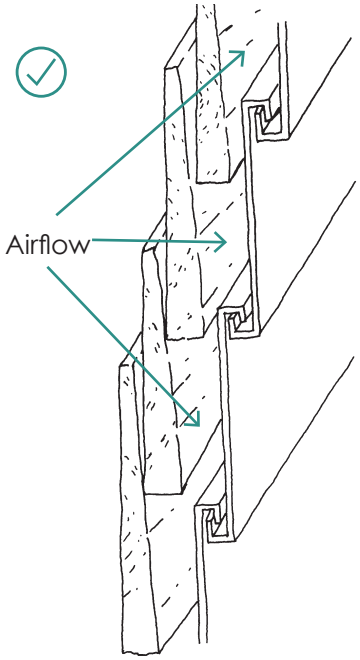


Install replacement siding in a way that does not obscure or damage historic ornament.

Typical Inappropriate Replacement Siding Types



Vinyl Siding and Ventilation



Where vinyl siding is approved, use a dimension that matches the original siding. Vinyl siding should be installed to allow airflow between historic siding and vinyl siding so moisture does not build up and cause structural deterioration.

When replacing a material on a non-primary elevation, match the original material in composition, scale, and finish. If vinyl siding is approved, limit it to the side and rear elevations and retain character-defining architectural features, as shown on the left. The thoughtless application of vinyl siding on the right obscures historic proportion and detail.