



GENEVA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - EXTERIOR SIDING POLICY

This siding policy was developed by the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) as a tool to aid owners of historic properties, landmarks or properties within historic districts, on how to apply the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SOI Standards) when considering improvement projects which affect exterior siding and architectural details. The SOI Standards are used by the HPC when reviewing permit applications.

A historic building is a product of the cultural heritage of its region, the technology of its construction period, the skills of its architect and builders, and the original, authentic materials used and the craftsmanship of its construction. Original siding, the siding installed when the building was first built, or siding which has acquired historic significance due to longevity, as well as any distinctive architectural details should be preserved if possible to maintain a historic building's authenticity and integrity. These materials help identify the property with a particular period or style from the past. If preservation is not feasible, replacements should be "in kind" matching the original characteristics as closely as possible. Eliminating, changing or covering original siding or architectural details, especially with materials that quantifiably alter the distinctive historic exterior characteristics of the property is to be avoided. Similarly, the addition of architectural features based on conjecture should be avoided.

If considering financial assistance through federal, state, or local organizations applicants may be required to closely comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards when performing exterior rehabilitation. Review of funded projects is a separate process from the permit review by the Historic Preservation Commission.

This policy addresses the types of requests the Commission typically reviews with regard to exterior siding and architectural details, and the information which is required when applying for HPC review. Approaches in treatment vary depending on the type of property and the type of improvements proposed. The Commission looks for compliance with the SOI Standards when reviewing permit applications for exterior improvements on historic properties. This policy applies to properties in historic districts rated contributing and higher per the 1999 Survey. Properties that are rated non-contributing per the 1999 Survey, while still requiring a permit and HPC Review, may have other options for improvements.

Below are the types of reviews conducted by the Historic Preservation Commission. Staff is available to help assess existing conditions, and answer questions regarding proposed projects.

I. REPAIR/PAINTING OF SIDING AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Most historic or original siding is made of old growth wood - which has many more growth rings per square inch than the fast growth wood used today. This makes old growth wood relatively more stable and durable and easier to repair – often, flaking paint or deterioration, may be repairable by a skilled contractor.

- Painting: No permit is required through the City of Geneva therefore, HPC review is not necessary.
- Repair: No Permit is required through the City of Geneva therefore HPC review is not necessary. Repair activities such as sanding, scraping, filling in with consolidant and repainting do not require a permit. Property owners may remove all siding boards, repair, and reinstall. A maximum of 10'x10' of boards may be replaced, in kind, without requiring a permit, or HPC review.

II. REPLACE EXISTING HISTORIC OR ORIGINAL SIDING WITH NEW SIDING (Permit and HPC Review Required)

If, after careful examination by trained individuals, repair is considered not feasible due to extensive deterioration, and cost estimates from contractors skilled in the repair and restoration of wood siding indicate that repair would be too costly, replace "in kind" with new materials that match the existing in characteristics, material, dimensions, details, style, texture, craftsmanship and other visual qualities. If cost estimates determine that replacement "in kind" is not possible, a different material may be considered. The new material should match as much as possible the existing in characteristics, material, dimensions, details, style, texture, craftsmanship and other visual qualities. Materials such as aluminum, steel, vinyl, EIFS on buildings that pre-date their common useage are not good matches for historic materials and are discouraged. HPC review applications should include all cost estimates for repair, replacement in kind, and replacement with new materials, as well as photographic and other documentation which illustrates the extent of deterioration. Note that replacing and changing distinguishing characteristics such as siding and architectural features may have an effect on eligibility for financial incentive programs such as the tax freeze/credit (see Staff for more information).



III. COVER HISTORIC OR ORIGINAL SIDING WITH NEW SIDING (Permit and HPC Review Required)

Covering historic material does not comply with the SOI standards and is discouraged. Often it is considered as a cosmetic treatment to hide difficulties such as peeling paint, stains, or other indications of deterioration. The covering of historic materials should never be considered as a substitute for proper care and maintenance. Hiding physical deterioration does nothing to prevent further damage and may accelerate damage to the structure. Covering not only changes the historic appearance, but also prevents visual inspections and early detection of problems that may compromise the integrity of the structure. For instance, rot and insect infestation may proceed and intensify, moisture issues may go undetected, and synthetic siding may be prone to flaking, fading, and a powdery residue. Vinyl is vulnerable to punctures, tears, cupping, and even melting under certain circumstances. Vinyl also releases toxic fumes when exposed to fire. In addition to these issues, irreversible damage to the historic fabric may be caused during installation due to holes and other marks caused by the required fasteners and adhesives, and architectural details are often covered or removed. HPC review applications should include all cost estimates as well as photographic and other documentation which illustrates the extent of the deterioration or other factors to be considered. Note that changing distinguishing characteristics such as siding and architectural features may have an effect on eligibility for financial incentive programs such as the tax freeze/credit (see Staff for more information).

IV. REPLACE NON-HISTORIC SIDING AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS (i.e., aluminum, steel, vinyl, asphalt shingle, EIFS) WITH NEW SIDING - (Permit and HPC Review Required)

If the existing siding is determined to be non-historical, look for evidence of the original sheathing materials located underneath the current siding. If original siding exists beneath the non-historic siding, assess the condition of the original siding, expose and repair if feasible (see **Repair/Painting of Siding and/or Architectural Details**). If the original siding is not present, or repair is not possible look for evidence that indicates the nature of the original materials. Replace with materials that match as much as possible the original in characteristics, material, dimensions, details, style, texture, craftsmanship and other visual qualities. (See **Replace Existing Historic or Original Siding with New Siding**) If no evidence is found, use siding which matches as much as possible the characteristics, material, dimensions, details, style, texture, craftsmanship and other visual qualities of materials in common use at the time of construction. Materials such as aluminum, steel, vinyl, EIFS on buildings that pre-date their common usage are not good matches for the historic materials and are discouraged. HPC review applications should include all cost estimates as well as photographic and other documentation which illustrates the extent of the deterioration or other factors to be considered. Note that changing distinguishing characteristics such as siding and architectural features may have an effect on eligibility for financial incentive programs such as the tax freeze/credit (see Staff for more information).

V. NEW CONSTRUCTION: SIDING FOR ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC STRUCTURES; SIDING FOR NEW SECONDARY BUILDINGS TO HISTORIC STRUCTURES - (Permit and HPC Review Required)

Siding for new additions to historic structures and siding for new secondary buildings to historic structures should complement siding on the original historic structure by taking into account such characteristics as: materials, dimensions, details, style, texture, craftsmanship and other visual qualities that correspond to the style and time period of construction. If siding on the historic structure is covered with non-historic siding, applicants may choose to consider removal of the non-historic siding and matching the original or historic siding which may be present underneath. Note that changing distinguishing characteristics such as siding and architectural features may have an effect on eligibility for financial incentive programs such as the tax freeze/credit (see Staff for more information). Siding for new secondary buildings should be compatible with the style and time period of construction and with the historic structure.

VI. REPLACING SIDING ON NON-HISTORIC (NON-CONTRIBUTING) STRUCTURES; SIDING TYPES FOR NEW STRUCTURES (PRIMARY & SECONDARY TO NON-HISTORIC STRUCTURES) (Permit and HPC Review Required)

Siding and architectural details on non-contributing structures should be appropriate in characteristics, material, dimensions, details, style, texture, craftsmanship and other visual qualities that complement the style and time period of construction. Siding for new construction should utilize materials which would be compatible with surrounding structures in the Historic District and be representative of the time and period of construction.



VII. THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The emphasis of the Standards is on repair first before replacement. Repair of original materials will retain a historic building's historic integrity. The HPC recognizes that not all original or historic siding is repairable.

VIII. RESOURCES

- Anne E. Grimmer, "**Preservation Brief #6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings.**" Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1979.
- John H. Myers, revised by Gary L. Hume, "**Preservation Brief #8: Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings.**" Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1984.
- Kay D. Weeks and David W. Look, AIA, "**Preservation Brief #10: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork.**" Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1982.
- Sharon C. Park, AIA, "**Preservation Brief #16: The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors.**" Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.
- Lee H. Nelson, FAIA, "**Preservation Brief #17: Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.**" Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings**, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983.
- NPS Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Building
- **Caring for Your Historic House.** Heritage Preservation and National Park Service. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998.
- McAlester, Virginia and McAlester, Lee. **A Field Guide to American Houses.** New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.