

SECTION 5

Rehabilitation Standards for Historic Buildings



Introduction

Rehabilitation is a practical approach to historic preservation. It is the process of repairing or altering an historic building for an efficient, contemporary use, while retaining its historic features. Rehabilitation includes structural repairs, repairing roofs and exterior finishes, painting, and upgrading mechanical systems. It may result from a change in use, or from a desire to continue its original or intended use. It should not be confused with restoration, which is the accurate (and often costly) return of a building to its original appearance, but which often renders it ill-suited to contemporary use.

Even minor rehabilitation projects should not proceed without first identifying the character-defining features of the historic building. The retention of these features should be an important consideration throughout the rehabilitation project. The identification phase should include research of historic photographs and documents; consultation with members of the APRB and/or recognized architectural historians and architects; and a detailed observation of other houses similar to the owner's elsewhere in the village. Section 2 on architectural styles in the village and the glossary at the end of these Standards also should be consulted in the identification phase of the project.

All residents of the Village of Pittsford are eligible for a two-hour, free consultation with Bero Architecture, P.C., architects specializing in the care of older buildings. The cost of this service is underwritten by Historic Pittsford Inc., a community not-for-profit preservation advocacy group. The consultation includes a meeting with a preservation architect and brief written report.

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Residents are encouraged to seek out a consultation when contemplating major repairs, additions, or changes to their homes.

The following standards are designed to help property owners conduct successful rehabilitation and restoration projects. The rehabilitation of residential buildings is the primary focus in this chapter. Both residential and commercial rehabilitations follow the same general principles.

The following rehabilitation standards for buildings in the village are organized according to the principal architectural and structural features of a typical house. These include the building's foundations, walls, chimneys, roof, porches, entrances and doors, windows, and exterior decorative elements, such as cornices, as well as features of the property's setting, such as fences and walls.

These rehabilitation standards are not intended to serve as a "how to" manual, but rather a set of principles illustrating the appropriate approach to common issues. Most problems occurring during a rehabilitation project arise from a property owner's decision to alter, obscure, or remove a feature(s), rather than to leave the feature(s) in place and repair it. For this reason, these Standards list common rehabilitation and remodeling mistakes that generally should be avoided. When in doubt about whether or how a particular feature or architectural element should be retained and repaired, the homeowner is urged to consult with a builder or architect, such as Bero Architecture, which is fully versed in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. In fact, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards can be consulted often during the research, planning, and execution phases of any rehabilitation project.

Windows & Shutters

Along with doors and entrances, windows are among the most important character-defining elements of an historic house. They add depth to the facade and provide visual interest by reflecting light. Poor maintenance will result in unattractive windows that do not operate smoothly. Accumulated layers of paint and broken sash cords and chains will cause the sash to bind. These conditions can be easily corrected by either a carpenter or a handy homeowner. Peeling paint, broken glass, and failing putty are unsightly, but also easily fixed. Beware of the tradesman who tells you that your windows can't be repaired; usually they can, and the Village of Pittsford APRB can be of assistance in directing you toward resources pertaining to window repair.

Homeowners may be concerned that their historic windows are not as energy efficient as replacement windows. Caulking window openings and installing weather-stripping will help stop air infiltration and energy loss. Repairing and installing sash locks will help the meeting rails meet tightly, and therefore stop drafts. Interior or exterior storm windows will further reduce energy loss. Exterior storm windows should be in the same color as the sash. Many factory color options are available today. Despite false marketing claims, historic windows with properly fitted storms

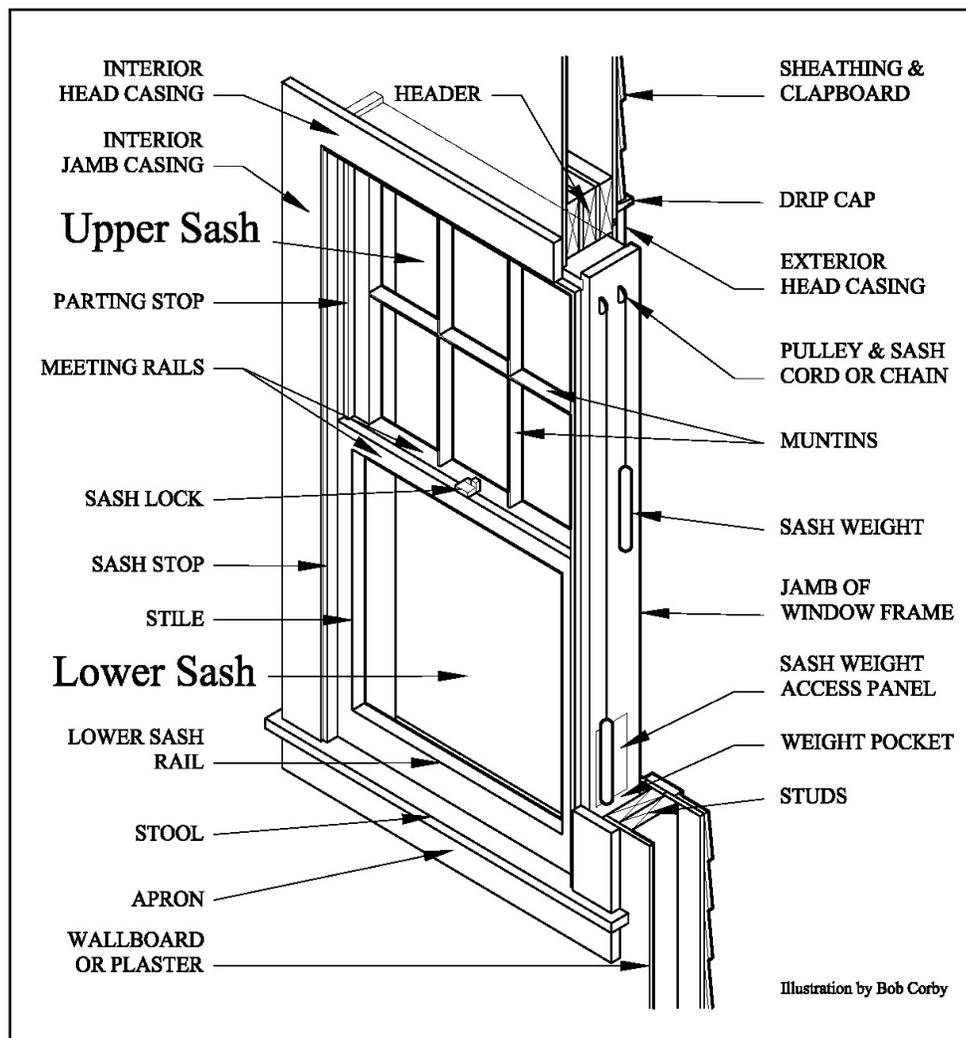
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have virtually the same thermal efficiency as a new window, and will last much longer because of the superior quality of the wood.

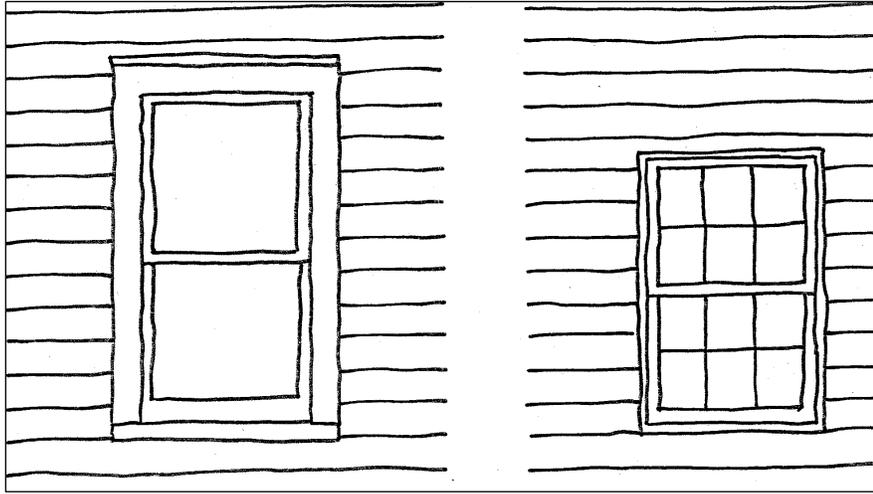
If your house already has replacement windows and you want to install something more appropriate, study your house carefully to see if any original sashes have survived. Other homes in the area and historic photographs may also provide more information. The new windows should fit the style of your home, not repeat the earlier mistake.

If your windows are beyond repair and must be replaced (a rare condition), carefully examine your existing windows, and select a replacement unit which matches the exterior of the original in every detail, including size, material, and number of lights. Note the number of lights, the dimensions of rails and stiles, and the profiles of muntins. All trim must also match exactly.

Double Hung Window Components



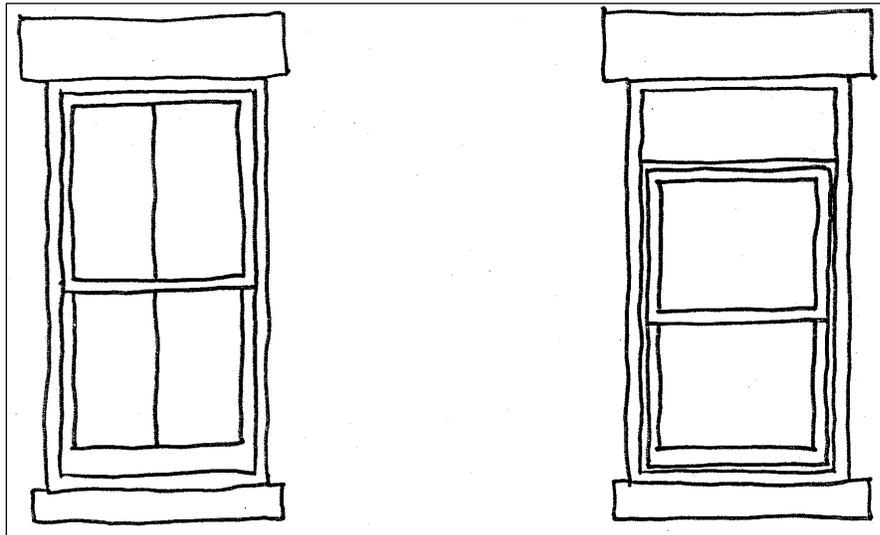
Window openings in wood frame buildings



Windows in historic wood frame buildings are usually twice as tall as they are wide. Traditional exterior trim includes the sill, a four-inch wide casing at the sides (jamb) and at the top (head), and a wood drip mold to shed water.

Stock modern windows lack traditional trim and therefore they are not visually compatible with older buildings. Contractors and architects usually will not select appropriate window sizes and shapes unless they are directed to do so.

Window openings in masonry buildings



Windows in masonry buildings have a stone or concrete sill and a lintel spanning the top of the opening. The junction between the wood window frame and masonry is covered by a narrow molding called a brick mold.

Replacement windows should be the same size as the original windows and should fill the whole height and width of the masonry opening.

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Replacement Window Options - If a window cannot be repaired, there are several options available to homeowners. Wood window, sash-only replacement is the least intrusive option, where the existing window frame, sill, and interior and exterior casement trim are preserved. Wood sash replacement kits are available and are a good option if the existing window frame is still square. If the existing window frame is too out of square or in a condition that cannot be repaired, full window unit replacement, including the sash and window frame, allows for replacement of the window unit without reducing the original size of the window glass exposure. Care should be taken to ensure that the exterior trim and siding around the new window unit match the existing opening exactly. The method of installing an entirely new window frame and sash within the existing window frame is not appropriate for historic window replacement, as this method of window replacement reduces the size of the original window opening.



Appropriate replacement window with simulated divided lights and profile matching the window it replaced.

Vinyl and clad windows - Vinyl windows are made solely of vinyl, which is extruded from a mold, and the inside is hollow. A complex cross section makes the sash rigid and, in most cases, strong. The amount of vinyl in the cross section affects the outward appearance and the cost of the windows. Minimal vinyl can translate into sashes that are too thin in profile for historic buildings, and/or that have a wavy surface from overly pliable vinyl, which appears to be of poor quality. Some manufacturers counter this with "heavy duty" models that can go too far in the opposite direction, having sash profiles that are too thick for historic buildings. In addition, the depth of some heavier windows is noticeably greater than historic windows, reducing the amount that the windows are recessed into their openings. In a double-hung window, this difference can be as much as two inches. Vinyl windows have a coefficient of expansion forty times greater than wood. They are highly vulnerable to thermal expansion and contraction. Often, after a few years, the seams split and condensation appears on the glass.

Despite improvements, vinyl windows remain a short-lived material and rarely look appropriate in historic buildings.

Vinyl and aluminum-clad window sashes have a solid wood or wood/plastic composite core, which is wrapped--or clad--in vinyl or aluminum. The vinyl/metal cladding can cover just the exterior



Inappropriate replacement window: Window profiles are too wide. Grids are located on inside of glass and do not resemble muntins. Shutters do not fit opening and lack hinges.

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face or the interior face also. The exterior appearance is similar for both the vinyl and vinyl-clad sashes, but the interior finish can differ, depending on whether the interior of the latter is wood or vinyl. Costs of windows with wood interiors depend upon whether the wood is paint grade or stain grade. Because of their solid, rigid composition, clad window sashes can be stronger than vinyl sashes of the same dimensions. For historic buildings, this means that the sash profile and depth can more closely match the dimensions of historic windows. These sashes are also heavier than hollow vinyl sashes and, when operated, can feel more like historic windows.

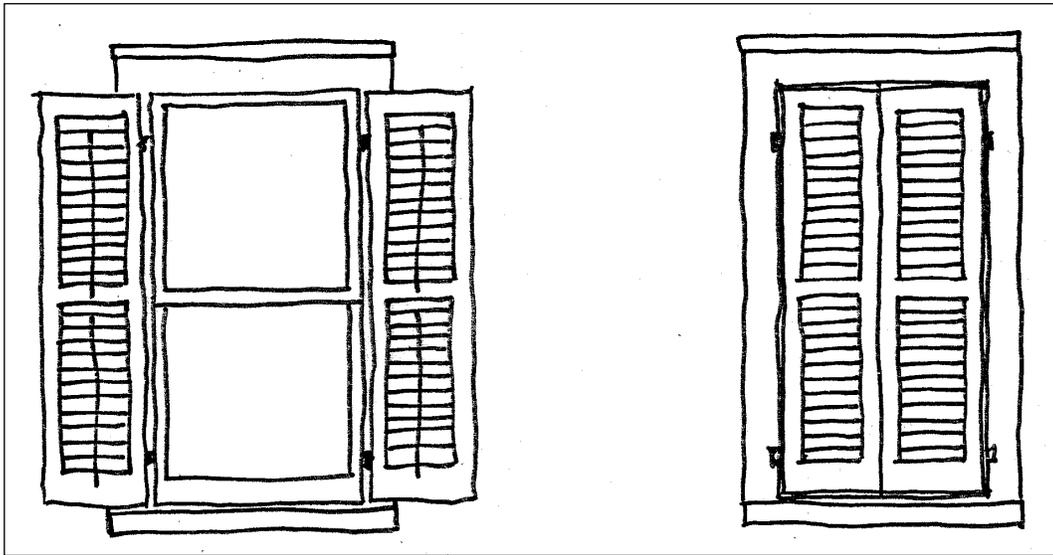
Glass Block Windows - The use of glass block to fill window openings generally is not appropriate in historic buildings. Glass block windows are normally installed in basement windows where ventilation is needed. The small vent windows set into the glass blocks are inadequate to provide adequate ventilation and are visually obtrusive and inappropriate in historic buildings.

Glass block in basements may be acceptable if one or more openings can be left with original windows or like replacements to allow for adequate ventilation. This allows the use of glass block in other windows without obtrusive vents. It also allows the applicant to leave any windows visible from the street with original or like replacement windows.

Where glass block is approved, the APRB may require additional measures to lessen the impact of the change from the original windows. Among such measures are the following:

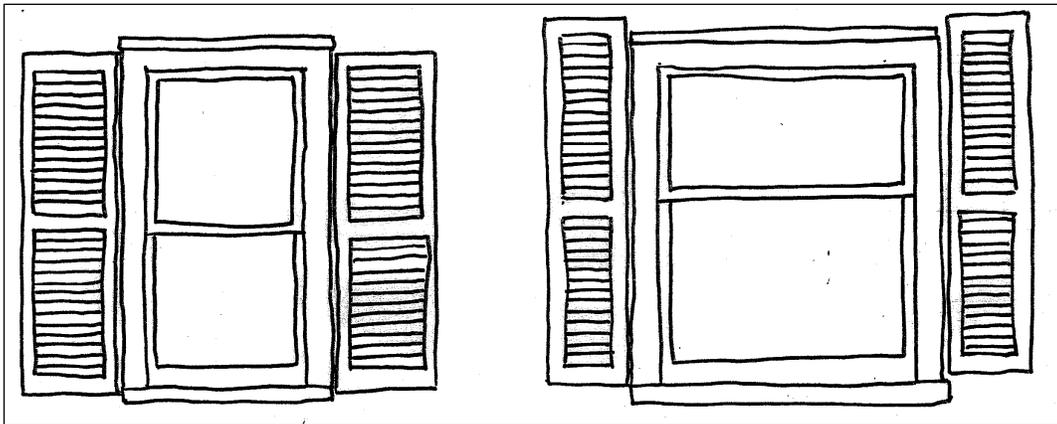
- Recessing the glass block as deeply as possible in the foundation wall.
- Using block sizes and glazing patterns to follow as closely as possible other window styles in the structure.
- Placing a window screen or obscuring storm window over the basement window opening to obscure the glass block.
- Arranging landscaping to lessen the visibility of the glass block.
- Using textured, obscuring glass block, rather than clear, reflective glass block.
- Not using glass block on windows visible from public rights-of way.

Shutters



Shutters should fit the window opening and be mounted with locking hinges over the window casing. The hinges lock the shutter in either the open or closed positions. Most historic shutters had operable louvers that were anchored to a vertical wood rod. When in the closed position, shutters swing into the window opening like a door.

Common Mistakes with Shutters



Shutters mounted flat against the siding outside of the window frame, and shutters that do not fit the size of the window opening detract from the appearance of historic buildings

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Window Shutters - Window shutters were a common feature on nineteenth and early twentieth-century houses. Shutters add character to a house and an opportunity to add an accent color to your facade. If you have historic shutters, it is preferable that you do not remove them. If your house does not have shutters, you may be able to determine if shutters were present in the past by looking for hardware “ghosts,” holes, or putty patches where the screws that held hinges were installed. Historic photographs may provide information on the appearance of missing shutters and hardware.

If you decide to replace missing shutters, it is important to choose shutters of an appropriate style that are the right size and shape. Shutters should be made of wood; they are constructed in the same way as doors, either rail and stile or board and batten. Rail and stile shutters may have solid panels, recessed or flush, with or without decorative cutouts in the top panel. One or more panels may have louvers – angled slats that admit the flow of air.

Each window opening typically has two shutters. Some may have a single shutter, if a chimney or other feature is in the way, or if the designer wanted a rustic appearance. When closed, the shutters should sit flush in the window opening. When mounted in the open position, shutters sit over the casing or window trim. Each leaf is half the width of the overall window opening. The shutter is as tall as the window opening is high. If the window has a curved top, the top of the shutters should be curved to meet the opening.

Shutters should be operable and hung on hinges. Shutters should never be fixed directly to the siding outside of the window casement trim. When shutters are mounted directly to the face of a house, there is no ventilation between the shutter and the house. The lack of air movement holds moisture against the building and accelerates deterioration of paint and siding. You can study historic photographs or pattern books or other homes in your neighborhood for ideas on shutter and hardware styles.

Recommended:

- Retaining historic windows whenever possible. Repairing damaged components (rather than replacing entire window unit), including frames, sash, pulleys, and glazing window.
- Preserving historic window size.
- Maintaining trim and original decorative elements.
- Selecting shutters that fit the size of the window sash opening (they should cover the window if closed).
- Mounting shutters over the window frame (casing).
- Maintaining the full size of the existing window opening.

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- Maintaining the existing sash configuration (e.g., two-over-two, etc.).
- Reopening historic window openings that have been covered or filled in.
- When replacement is required, matching original window design and muntin configuration.
- Using muntin patterns appropriate to the age and style of the building or representative of the village's vernacular building tradition.

Avoid:

- Covering or closing in window openings on a primary façade.
- Altering size, shape, or proportion of window.
- Concealing or removing casings and/or decorative trim.
- Adding non-historic, decorative elements, such as a new muntin pattern or a half-round transom light.
- Mounting shutters outside the window frame (flat against the siding).
- Selecting shutters that are too wide, narrow, tall, or short for the window opening to which they are attached.
- Installing new window units that do not fit the opening.
- Using opaque or reflective glass.
- Replacing durable wood or steel windows with shorter-lived vinyl products.
- Installing windows with plastic grids located between the glass or on the interior face of the glass without exterior muntin glass dividers.
- Adding bay windows where none existed.
- Installing window glazing flush with wall surface.

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Doors

Doors and entrances are key architectural features contributing to the character of most buildings' facades. Doors are often one of the most reliable indicators of a home's age and architectural style.

Historic doors should be retained. If the APRB determines that a door is un-repairable and must be replaced, the new door should match the style of the building. Wood doors are preferred, rather than doors made of metal, vinyl, or composite material. In some cases, non-wood doors may be acceptable for rear or side doors.

The decorative elements around doors are as important as the door itself. Every effort should be made to retain these elements, or to replace them if missing or irreparably damaged.

Avoid:

- Introducing, removing, or changing the location of doors and entrances that alter the architectural character of the building;
- Replacing existing doors with retail stock doors, or doors of inappropriate design, or of a different size or width. The arrangement of door panels and window lights is a significant architectural feature and varies from period to period. Replacement doors should have an appropriate panel and light arrangement for that period;
- Blocking up or removing transoms or sidelights;
- Replacing, resizing, or rearranging such architectural features as pilasters, corner blocks, panels, transom muntins, or sidelights;
- Replacing traditional screen doors with stamped aluminum panel, stock colonial style, or otherwise inappropriate screen doors that are not compatible with the style of the front door or entry.

Garage Doors

Traditional wood garage doors or barn doors contribute to an historic property's character and should be preserved. If the APRB determines that a garage door is beyond repair, or if the original door has already been replaced with one of an improper style, the new door should fit the style of the garage and/or residence.

Most garages associated with older homes in the village are newer structures than the principal residential structure on the property and are modest in style and design. Appropriate materials are

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wood and certain wood-like composites. Raised panel design and stamped metal doors are typically inappropriate for use with barns that have been converted to garage use.

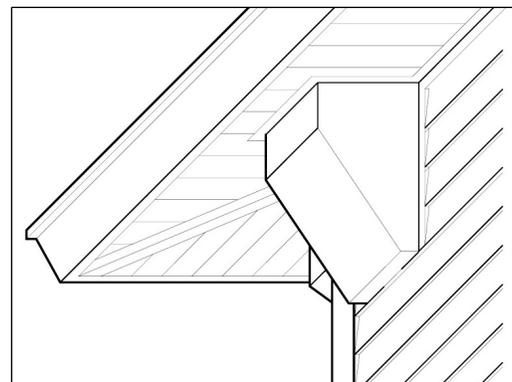
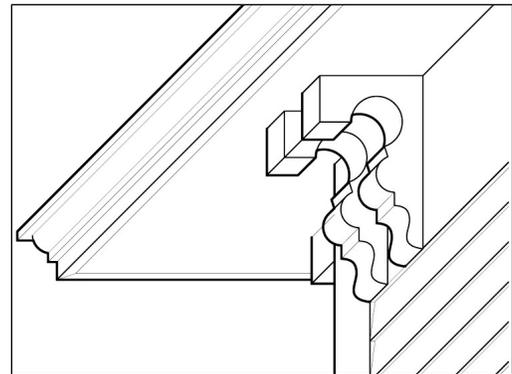
Avoid:

- Replacing garage doors on simple, functional garages with highly designed “carriage house” doors that do not fit the style of the garage or home;
- Using replacement doors with inappropriate stamped faux surface textures or raised panel effects;
- Changing the style of garage doors and carriage house doors that are a significant architectural element to the garage and/or house.

Siding and Exterior Walls

Most of the older vernacular homes in the village are wood frame construction with wood clapboard siding. Some of the larger homes and many commercial structures in the village are traditional brick masonry construction. There are some examples of other styles of exterior wall finishes (siding), such as cobblestone, board-and-batten wood siding, cedar shingle, natural stone, stucco, and rusticated cement block. Original exterior wall finishes are another very important indicator of a home’s age and architectural style. Property owners should protect, repair, and maintain original siding and exterior wall surfaces.

Wood Siding - Installing vinyl or metal siding over wood siding can cause damage or prevent the visual detection of damage to the underlying structure. Often, the new siding is used to cover damage caused by moisture within the walls revealed by peeling paint. Without eliminating the source of water, the trapped moisture will rot the wood, and may attract mold growth and insects. Vinyl and metal are not water-tight. Manufacturers punch weep holes into the bottom edge of the faux clap board siding panels to allow water to escape, but if the water goes into the walls, it can cause irreparable harm.



Substitute cladding materials often destroy or conceal architectural details. The illustrations above show how the appearance of an eave and brackets is changed by the application of the aluminum panning that is a standard component of a vinyl siding installation.

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The loss of trim around windows is one of the most visible impacts of a typical vinyl siding application. New siding rarely matches the look of older siding, with noticeable differences in board exposures, profiles, textures, and joints. Even when the differences between old and new siding are minimized, certain components of vinyl and metal siding systems lack historic precedent, and are therefore inappropriate to historic buildings. Receiving channels, especially, are visually prominent enough to alter the overall appearance of a building. They are used where siding panels meet window or door trim or architectural details, like porch brackets, or where the siding panels meet at inside or outside corners. While some manufacturers are trying to make components that appear more like traditional ones, they have struggled to overcome the need for receiving channels.

Replacing original siding can be acceptable if the original material is deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, or catastrophic exterior paint failure can be traced to a house envelope moisture vapor problem. While in-kind replacement is preferred, alternative materials can be appropriate if the APRB determines that they look like the original. An alternative material that has been accepted as a replacement for wood clapboard siding is fiber cement board, which is available in the same configurations as wood siding.

Avoid:

- Applying non-historic surface coverings over wood siding. The most popular of these are aluminum and vinyl siding, although either stucco or asbestos siding was at one time considered an attractive covering. Vinyl and metal siding are not energy efficient or maintenance free. Matching repairs and additions to vinyl siding can be problematic over time, due to color fading and style changes. They can seal in moisture and speed the disintegration of original wood siding. The removal of artificial siding is almost always considered a positive step in a building's restoration or rehabilitation.
- Replacing clapboard siding with shingle siding (or visa versa), or replacing siding of a different reveal, unless these measures can be historically justified.
- Altering or removing distinctive shingle patterns or altering the width or reveal of historic shingle siding without historical evidence for doing such.
- Replacing wood elements unless they are beyond repair.
- Installing rigid foam insulation under siding. When this is done, the face of the siding extends beyond the original trim boards and erases important shadow line details.

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Masonry and Stone Exterior Walls - Brick, original stucco, and stone exterior wall finishes typically represent examples of superior craftsmanship and unique or hard-to-find materials. Often, the careful repair and maintenance of these character-defining elements of historic buildings require professional expertise so as not to harm or cause future deterioration. Stone or brick wall surfaces should never be covered over, unless no other repair alternative can be found.

Pointing, the term used for repair of deteriorated mortar joints, is done by removing any old, deteriorated mortar and replacing it with new. Pointing can be important to the continued sound physical condition of a building and has the potential to affect the appearance of historic masonry. The removal of deteriorated mortar should be undertaken only when absolutely necessary, usually where mortar is eroded or crumbling. Most structures built until the early twentieth century used lime mortar with little or no cement binder. Removal of these low-strength mortars should be performed using hand-held, non-power tools, since power tools, such as masonry saws, have the potential to damage masonry units. Mortar made of hard Portland cement is much more difficult to remove from joints, and the use of hand-held chisels is likely to damage the masonry units. Here, carefully controlled pneumatic chisels or small grinders may be appropriate, but these require extensive experience and quality control to assure that the masonry units are not damaged.

Complete re-pointing is usually not necessary, nor is it a sound preservation treatment. New mortar should match the historic in strength, composition, color, texture, aggregate distribution, and all other qualities as determined by a laboratory analysis. Prepackaged "masonry cements" generally contain large amounts of Portland cement, and therefore produce a very strong mortar that can be damaging to softer historic bricks and terra cotta. If mortar analysis is not undertaken to determine the composition of the original mortar, the following soft, lime-rich mortar mix is appropriate for use on most historic masonry: 1 part white Portland cement; 3 parts Type S hydrated lime; 6 parts sand with no admixtures, because color additives can weaken masonry if used in large quantities; a color match is best achieved using only appropriate colored aggregates (sand, brick dust, etc.). Equally important to mortar content is the appearance of new mortar joints. New joints should match the historic in width, tooling, texture, and profile. Special character-defining joints, such as "ruled" or "grapevine," should be repaired or reproduced carefully.

Masonry materials may require repair, as well as pointing, and appropriate techniques will vary according to the specific material. Because damaged brick units are difficult to repair, replacement may be most appropriate and may involve using new or salvaged brick. If repair is not possible and replacement is necessary, new units should match the existing in size, color, texture, and all other qualities. Historic stone materials that are damaged should be treated carefully. In keeping with the preservation Standards, the best approach is repair. Replacement should only be considered if the material is deteriorated beyond repair. Where cracked, spalled, or exfoliated, limestone, sandstone, marble, terra cotta, cast stone, or concrete materials should be repaired to prevent further damage. The type of stone, and type and extent of damage should be determined before the repair method is chosen. The repair should be carefully executed to match the damaged material.

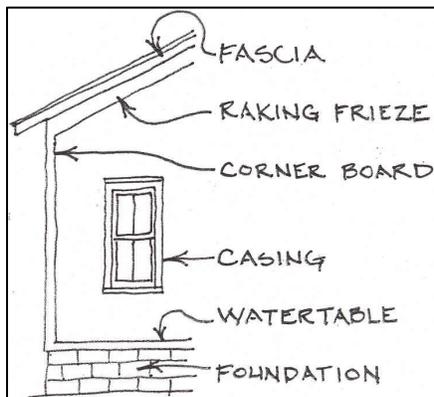
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Avoid:

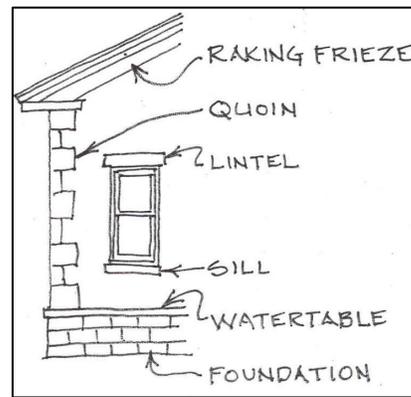
- Painting a brick or masonry wall where there is no historical basis for such a measure. Likewise, a painted brick or masonry surface should not be stripped in order to return it to its presumed historical appearance. Such stripping can damage the brick or masonry and leave it susceptible to water damage and deterioration.
- Using abrasive chemicals or high-pressure cleaners on brick or masonry walls or features.
- Pointing brick with synthetic compounds or using mortar with a high Portland cement content. Mortar that is too hard will damage the surrounding bricks, stone, or other materials.
- Applying a waterproof, water resistant, or non-historic stucco treatment as a substitute for pointing or masonry repair.
- Replacing chipped or damaged stone or brickwork, unless it is damaged beyond repair.

Architectural Trim

Architectural trim, defined as the decorative moldings, brackets, cornices, pediments, watertable, corner boards, frieze trim, quoins, and other features applied to a building's exterior, serve as the "finish" for most historic houses. Before the advent of modern, undecorated styles of mid and late twentieth century architecture, builders and architects used architectural trim to accentuate certain styles and guide the eye toward different planes and projections of a building's surface. Historic trim is an important and readily identifiable feature of most historical styles and eras and always should be retained, if possible.



Typical wood-frame building trim



Typical masonry building trim

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Wood-Frame Construction - In wood-frame buildings, decorative trim is provided at most junctions between different materials and between different surfaces. These include the top of the foundation (watertable), corners (corner boards), roof (frieze trim), and openings (casings). Door and window casings are typically four inches wide, while trim at the frieze, watertable, and corners is often wider.

Masonry Construction - In traditional masonry buildings, the same junctions are highlighted, but in different ways. At the division between the foundation and the exterior wall above, the watertable is indicated by a change in materials and is occasionally accentuated by a slight horizontal projection. Corners can be emphasized by quoins or pilasters. The frieze can be either wood trim or a differentiated treatment of the unit masonry wall material. Openings are emphasized by sills, lintels, arches, and/or rowlock header courses. Masonry construction usually respects gravity, which means that there is a transition from heavier, rougher materials located near the ground to progressively lighter materials at the top of the building.

Ornamentation - Ornamentation was traditionally used to reinforce the organization of a facade or other architectural elements. Modern manufactured stock ornaments can give buildings a "cartoon" appearance when they are not properly scaled to the features they are applied to. Common examples include fiberglass shutters that don't fit or work, aluminum columns that lack the proper taper (entasis), and oversized moldings.

If a traditional ornamental system is used, a basic understanding of classical proportions and relationships will help avoid an awkward visual appearance. For example, a column normally supports a thick beam or architrave and a projecting cornice. Information on the basic components and proportions of the classical column system is available in *Architectural Graphic Standards*, a general architectural reference book.



This historic porch was carefully designed and proportioned to coordinate with classical detailing and other design elements on this historic house.



This modern porch combines classical elements without an understanding of their proportions or inter-relationship. As a result, this porch has an awkward and inappropriate top-heavy appearance.

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An understanding of proportion does not require a precise recreation of past historic styles. Abstracted features may be used to identify new buildings as a product of our time.

Repair and Replacement - Contemporary metal and vinyl door and window trim differ in shape, dimension, and texture from historic wood trim. They also lack the detail and precise fit possible with crafted wood components. While metal can be bent, and vinyl can be molded, into many shapes, few shapes are actually available on the market.

The joints in metal or vinyl siding and trim visually contrast from the appearance of those on traditional buildings. Because these materials cannot be sanded, puttied, or glued, the joints are often quite visible. This is especially bothersome at the butt joints between siding boards and at the corners of window and door trim. Often inappropriate, purposeful gaps, must be maintained for thermal expansion and contraction.

Trim pieces that mimic elaborate wood moldings, but are made of materials like solid Cellular PVC and fiberglass, are being used in instances where moisture exposure creates decay problems. Some of these appear enough like traditional trim that they can be appropriate on historic buildings, if the profiles match and they are installed, painted, and finished like wood.

Avoid:

- Removing or replacing trim, cornices, brackets, pilasters, door and window moldings, pediment, medallions, dentil and modillion molding, corner quoins, and other character-defining architectural trim, particularly from the principal facade;
- Obscuring or covering architectural details with aluminum or vinyl siding.
- Adding trim salvaged from another building or buildings to create a false historical appearance.
- Moving or rearranging existing trim to another part of the building, without historical evidence to back this up.
- Using stock trim when original trim could be replicated.
- Improperly sized shutters that are mounted in the wrong position.
- Ornamentation that is not scaled to fit openings.
- Proportions that are inconsistent with traditional decorative elements.

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Porches and Decks

Porches extend the usable living space of a house, and can provide either an informal or ceremonial entrance. A classical portico is often the distinguishing feature of a Greek Revival style dwelling, while a wraparound porch contributes to the characteristically rambling, asymmetrical appearance of the Queen Anne style. Even on simple, vernacular homes, the porch often receives architectural embellishment.

Because they are fully exposed to the elements, porches often require more than routine maintenance, and are often subject to inappropriate remodeling in the name of cost or changing tastes.

The decision on how and to what extent to rehabilitate a porch can test the mettle of even the most devoted preservationist. In the end, decisions on the rehabilitation, removal, or addition of a porch should be based on careful historic research, a determination of the house's dominant architectural style and how the porch contributes or detracts from this style, an examination of what is common in the surrounding neighborhood, and the porch's structural condition.

Historic Porches - Most historic porches incorporate refined proportions, craftsmanship and precise carpentry work. Porches enhance the visual character of the house and the neighborhood. The porch is often the most distinctively detailed part of a house.

Original porch railings should be preserved, and should be repaired, rather than replaced. Where replacement is the only option, the new work should match the style, scale, and material of the original railings. Railings on historic buildings were often very elaborate and unique. Railings span between posts, and incorporate caps that shed water. Most porches built before 1880 did not have railings. Queen Anne style homes often had decoratively turned spindles and posts. Later styles usually have square balusters. Top and bottom rails are designed with a section strong enough to resist sagging and are canted to shed water. Balusters usually have a minimum dimension of 1- 1/4" by 1-1/4" and are spaced with gaps only about 1-1/2 to 2 times the baluster width. Balusters are attached to the bottom of the handrail and to the top of the lower rail, not the sides. Most hardwood spindles sold in home improvement stores are appropriate for interior stairs, but are not durable enough to be used on porches.

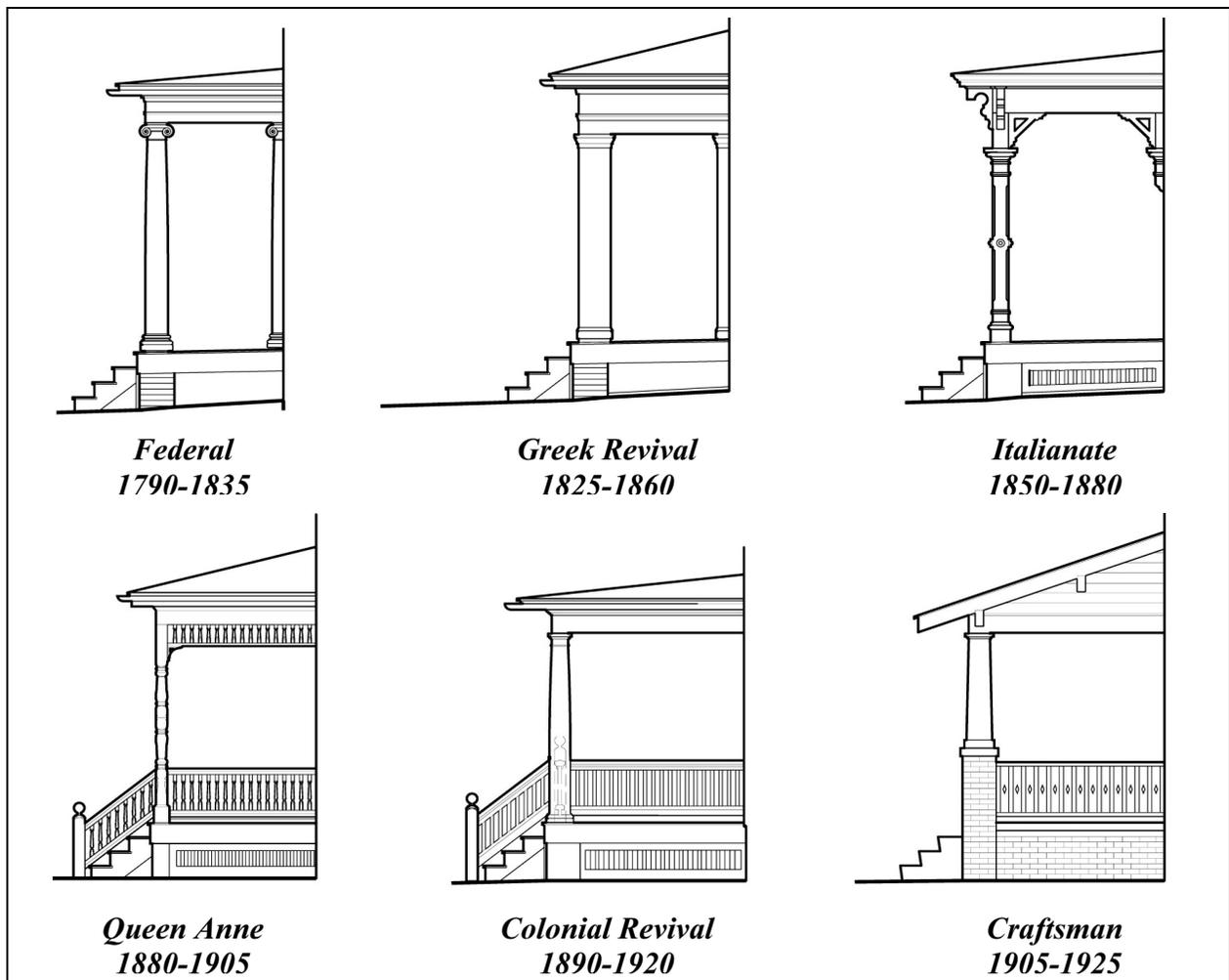
Other porch details:

- Piers (supporting the floor structure) of brick, stone, or block raise the porch deck above the ground, allowing air to circulate beneath the floor.
- Framed wood lattice panels fill the spaces between the piers. Because the wood rots from close proximity to wet ground and mulch, certain pressure-treated and composite material can be appropriate here.
- Painted wood skirt trim covers the rim joints, giving the porch edge a finished look.

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- Flooring is commonly 5/4" thick, 3" to 4" wide, and tongue-and-groove fir, painted or stained. The floor boards typically run perpendicular to the house, and the floor is sloped to shed water. Steps commonly consist of Fir 5/4x12 treads, often slotted for drainage.
- Posts are often carved, turned, or tapered, and are often the most uniquely detailed part of a porch. Each architectural style has a matching set of appropriate style columns.
- A visible header beam, spanning between posts, is usually visible below the roof eave.
- Roof slope and eave trim characteristics can be very specific to certain architectural styles. Most historic porches have a low-slope roof. Craftsman, Tudor, and some gable front porches found on Colonial Revival houses have a moderate slope.

Porch Styles



Compatible (New) Porches



The square posts of this new porch complement the simple mid nineteenth-century lines of this gable-and-wing house.



Gabled entry porch, with cornice returns and barrel-vault ceiling, suits the style of this 1940s Colonial Revival style home.



Like many village homes, this ca. 1902 Dutch Colonial had its porch removed in 1950s. Reviewing historic photographs provided design information to allow construction of a new porch that matches the design language and scale of the original.



The rear entrance of First Presbyterian Church was redesigned to provide cover from the weather and accommodate handicapped persons. The style of the new entrance and porch matches the Colonial revival style of the churches ca. 1968 Fellowship Hall. The Tuscan porch columns, with proper entasis, are fiberglass. The columns were approved by the APRB because their appearance is very similar to wood

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Decks – Pressure-treated wood decks became popular in the 1970s. They are not common features of historic buildings, and are rarely appropriate in a preservation district. Traditional buildings had porches, with a roof, railing, columns, and materials that visually tied it to the building. Conversely, a typical deck lacks these features and usually appears incongruous on an older building. Because a deck is uncovered and unprotected from the weather, it is usually built of pressure-treated lumber, a material that is usually thicker, wider and of poorer quality than traditional wood components, and is usually left unpainted. The few available stock railings and spindles are almost always inappropriate to a traditional building.

Certain types of decks are appropriate for some situations. A stoop, a small deck with railings, steps, and flooring, whose details and materials are consistent with historic porches, may be an appropriate entrance treatment on certain buildings. Decks of this sort should be considered roofless porches, should be of similar size and configuration as historic porches, and should be connected to the building, rather than floating in the yard. Homeowners should be aware, though, that uncovered, non-pressure treated wood may deteriorate.

A deck without railings can be appropriate in a preservation district on less visible sides of the house. The New York State Building Code does not require railings when the deck floor is elevated 30 inches or less above grade. To minimize its visibility, the floor surface of the deck should be as low as possible, and rim joists should be trimmed with painted wood to match details of the building. Pressure-treated deck floorboards can be appropriate, but should be 4" or 6" wide and colored to minimize visual conflict with the building. A deck that fits into a corner of a building can be more congruous with the building than a deck projecting into the yard. Note also that a handrail at steps adjacent to the building can be attached to the building, rather than standing free at the opposite side of the steps.

Avoid:

- Introducing a new porch or porch elements that are incompatible in size, scale, material, and color; examples include new metal columns or wrought-iron posts, over-scaled columns with elaborate capitals, and metal or plastic balustrades.
- Enclosing (partially or wholly) porches, porte cocheres, and balconies.
- Enlarging a one-story porch to make it two or more stories or separating a two-story porch to make it smaller.
- Removing a porch that is not repairable and not replacing it, or replacing it with a new porch that does not convey the same visual appearance.
- Covering a porch with a non-historic material, such as metal or vinyl siding, or "winterizing" a screened porch by temporarily attaching plastic sheeting.
- Creating a false historical appearance by not basing changes on historical research, including photographic evidence.

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- Stripping porches of all or some of their character-defining elements, including balusters, posts, columns, steps, brackets, and roof decorations.
- Replacing an entire porch, unless it is too deteriorated to repair, or building a new porch if it is not architecturally appropriate. The new porch should match the original as closely as possible in materials, size, and detail.
- Using indoor-outdoor carpeting or rugs to weatherproof a porch floor. This keeps the underlying wood wet and promotes rot.
- Replacing simpler turned or chamfered posts with more elaborate columns, when not based on historical research.

Roofing

Roofs are a highly visible component of historic buildings in the village. They are among the most recognizable and prominent identifying features of American architectural styles, including Federal, Greek and Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Bungalow, and American Foursquare styles. The roof adds to the architectural character of a house through its scale, color, and texture and the way it is installed. The decision to replace, reconfigure, or just repair a roof takes on added importance in the Village of Pittsford. Roof materials, such as slate, wood shingles, and metal, also help to determine the unique character of an historic house. Original roof materials with distinctive character should be retained and repaired, if possible. Many original roof materials provide a building with significant character, and many can last a surprisingly long time if maintained. If original roofing must be replaced, the replacement material should be similar to the original in scale, color, and texture.

Most nineteenth-century village buildings originally had wood shingle roofs. Asphalt shingle roofs became common in the twentieth century and remain a popular roofing material today.

Alternative Roofing Materials for Historic Roofs - APRB approval is not required when an existing material is to be replaced with a matching material. If the material is not an exact match, a certificate of appropriateness will be required. The question of what constitutes a “match” is raised often with roofing. Several roofing products on the market today appear to match historic materials, but appearance may not be enough to qualify for a match. Before replacing a roof with a different material, it is best to check with the APRB.

The National Park Service recommends against the use of substitute materials when the original is available. In Preservation Brief #16, *The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors*, NPS states:

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In general, four circumstances warrant the consideration of substitute materials:

- 1) The unavailability of historic materials.
- 2) The unavailability of skilled craftsmen.
- 3) Inherent flaws in the original materials.
- 4) (building) Code required changes.

Architectural Asphalt Shingles in Place of Shakes, Slate, or Tile - Architectural shingles are thicker versions of the standard asphalt shingles seen on roofs everywhere. Where standard shingles typically carry a twenty or twenty-five year warranty, the thicker “architectural” shingles are warranted up to 50 years. New types of architectural shingles are meant to look like wood shingles, slate, or clay tile, and some get relatively close. Thicker profiles yield shadow lines much like those of traditional roofing, and some provide the random patterns of shakes or slates. Shapes that match those of flat clay tiles are also available. Colors approximate those of the traditional materials, and some brands even mimic the randomness of natural materials.

There are, however, noticeable differences between the surface finishes of the shingles and of the shakes, slates, or tiles. The shingles have the granular surface common to standard asphalt shingles, but not to the others. The differences are apparent from the typical distance from the ground to a house roof. As a result, these materials may not be acceptable for use on historic buildings with original historic roofing.

Synthetic slate shingles - This is a new family of materials intended to look like stone slate, but at a lower cost and weight. Each brand is made in its own unique shapes, colors, and textures, and from ingredients ranging from recycled tires and plastic to stone dust and fiberglass.

While some products approximate the originals, many others are noticeably artificial. Most lack the distinct randomness in thickness, width, color, and patina of natural slate, which gives character to a roof. Some brands try to suggest randomness by limiting a pattern repeat to every four to six courses vertically and four feet or so laterally. Diligent roofers optimize the randomness by laying out the slates on the ground, as is done with natural slates. Still, most roofs have a general blandness, especially on large expanses.

Most brands of synthetic slate don't come in graduated sizes, as does natural slate. In many traditional roofs, slates become gradually larger moving down from the ridge to the eaves. This was done for practical reasons, but the aesthetic results are quite striking.

Finally, the color and finish of most brands are very uniform, which just doesn't happen in nature. Some brands have accent slates every so often with a different hue than the others, but they are typically too few and far between to make much difference.

Metal Roofing - Metal roofing can be a tempting substitute roofing material for asphalt shingles on a residential building. Replacing an asphalt shingle roof with a metal roof can significantly alter

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the character of a building. Great care should be taken to determine if a metal roof is appropriate for the age and style of the home.

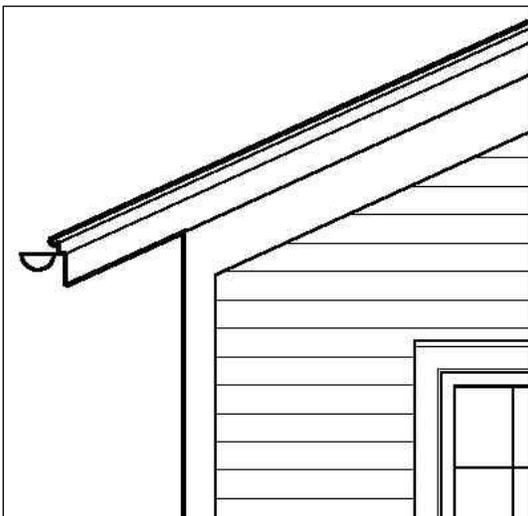
Typically, standing seam historic metal roofing is the most appropriate style metal roof installation for a residential building. The use of standing seam metal roofing was first popularized in western New York in the mid nineteenth century, and has been in use since that time. As a material, standing seam roofing never became as popular locally as in other regions of the nation. The Village of Pittsford retains a few historic examples of standing seam metal roofs from the early twentieth century, including the Village Hall, the blacksmith shop, hog shed, bull barn, and wagon shed at Pittsford Farms, and the kidney bean warehouses at the T. J. Zornow complex on Schoen Place.

Other styles of metal roofing, such as corrugated metal panels with visible surface fasteners, nontraditional rake and drip edge cladding, and bulky hip capping and flashing methods, would not be appropriate for a residential neighborhood. That style of metal roofing is more common and appropriate for an agricultural/industrial setting, as is seen in the Schoen Place district.

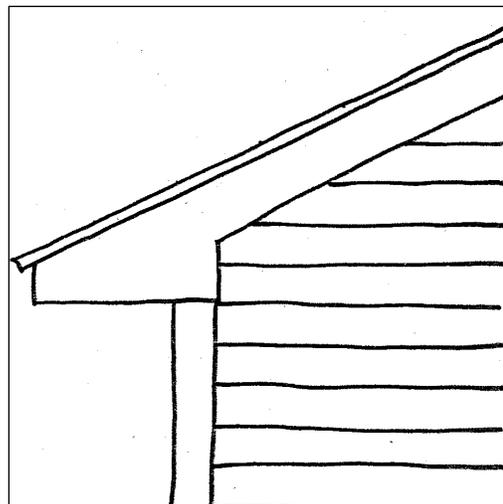
Roof Shapes - The shape of a roof is one of a building's most significant character-defining elements. Efforts should be made to retain a roof shape in an uncluttered form, free of satellite dishes, skylights, solar panels, and mechanical equipment.

The APRB does determine the appropriateness of all appurtenances. While these objects may be seen as necessities of modern life, they may not be acceptable everywhere. If they are proposed, all efforts should be made to conceal them from public view.

Eave Details



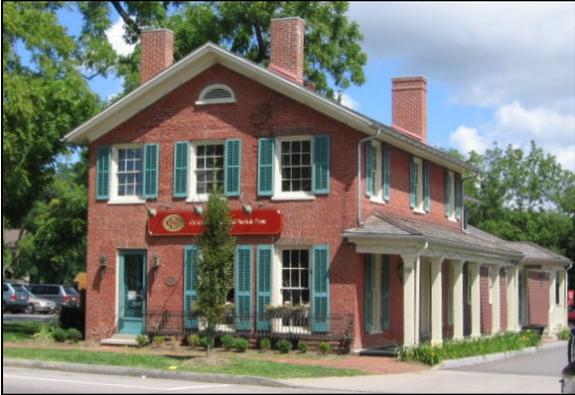
Traditional eave detail, often called the “plumb-cut eave”; the soffit is parallel to the roof slope and the fascia is vertical.



The modern boxed soffit is not appropriate for many pre-1950 buildings.

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Roof Types



Front-gable roof



Side-gable roof



Cross-gable roof



Mansard roof



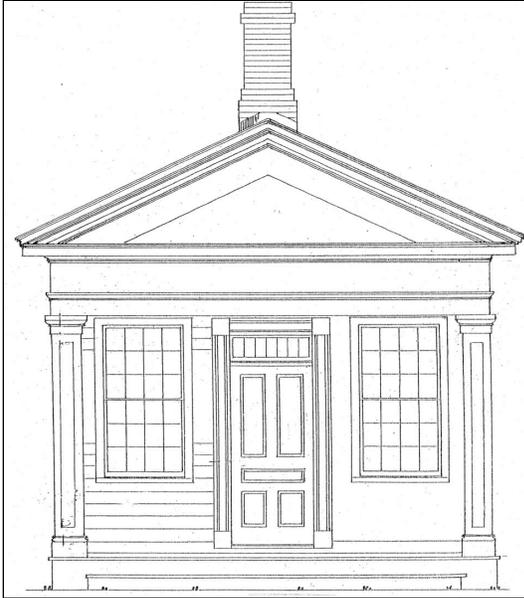
Gambrel roof



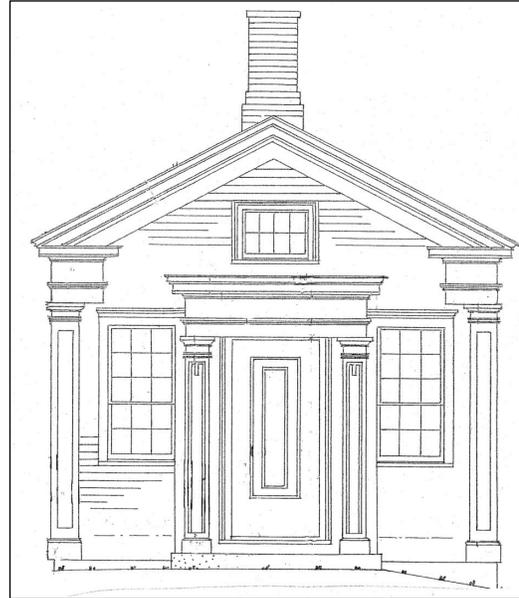
Hip roof

Classical Revival Eave Details

Typical of Federal, Greek Revival, and Colonial Revival buildings

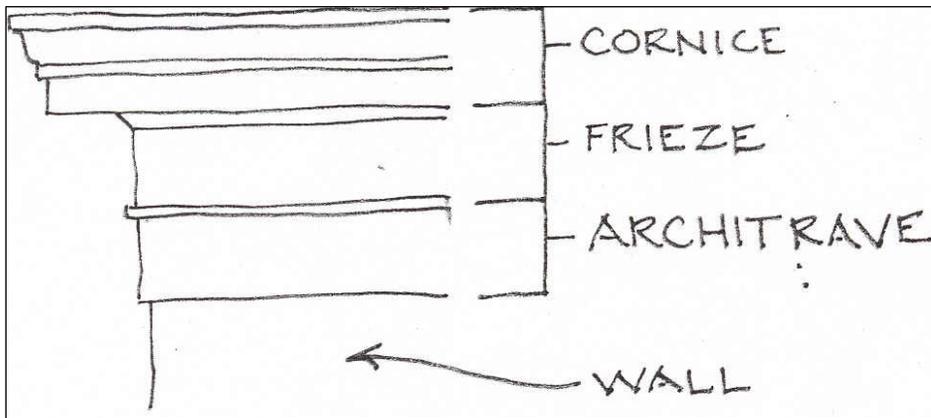


Pediment—Gable treatment where a triangle is formed by the two raking cornices and a continuous horizontal cornice across the base of the gable



Cornice return—Similar to pediment except horizontal cornice is not continuous

Elements of a Cornice



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Dormers - A dormer is an important architectural roof feature, defined as a windowed structure with its own roof that projects from the sloping main roof of a building or is a continuation of the upper part of a wall, so that the eave line of the main roof is interrupted. There are several types of dormers, and they reflect the style of certain roof shapes, such as gable, hip, and shed style. In general, dormers were not common until the introduction of the Colonial Revival style in the 1890s. Other, less common dormer styles include the arched top, eyebrow, pediment gable, and wall/flush dormer. The style of a dormer will match the style of the roof or the architectural style of the house. Adding a dormer where none was present or removing an existing dormer can negatively impact the character of the roof on a house, if not designed properly.

Avoid:

- Radically changing, damaging, or destroying roofs that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building, so that, as a result, the character of the building is diminished. Consult the architectural style section in these design standards, and observe the roofs of other similar historic houses in the village to determine if your roof is characteristic of its period and style and is a truly contributing element in its design.
- Removing a major portion of the roof or roofing material that is repairable, and reconstructing it with new material in order to create a uniform or "improved" appearance.
- Changing the essential character of a roof by adding inappropriate features (dormers, vents, skylights, air conditioners, solar panels), which are visible from the public right-of-way.
- Stripping the roof of sound historic materials (i.e., clay, shingle, metal, or slate) and substituting a cheaper material, such as asphalt shingle. Asphalt shingles may be an acceptable substitute for wood shingles only if they are of a rectangular design and have a uniform tone of black, dark green, or dark gray.
- Replacing an entire roof feature, such as a dormer, cupola, or belvedere, when repair and limited replacement would be feasible.
- Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically altered.
- Using a substitute material for the replacement part that does not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts of the roof.
- Altering the existing roof pitch or introducing a new roof pitch that is not appropriate.

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Chimneys

Four chimneys, two on each gable end, are a hallmark feature of a Federal Period style of architecture found in several prominent village buildings. The Phoenix Hotel building on the southeast corner of South Main Street and State Street is perhaps the most visible example. Other examples are 24 and 31 Monroe Avenue, 21 Church Street, 25 South Main Street, and the grand Augustus Elliot House, now owned by Saint Louis Church. A modern interpretation of these gable-end chimneys was worked into the design of the new village library. In fact, chimneys are an integral, although often overlooked, design feature of many historical styles.

In the past, the placement of chimneys often depended on the period or style. Although utilitarian in design, chimneys sometimes received their own decorative adornment. Through most of the nineteenth century, chimneys typically were located at the ridge of a gable roof. Tudor Revival style homes could have a decorative chimney situated in the front of the house or exposed and prominent on a side gable end.

Avoid:

- Removing all or part of an historic chimney without ascertaining its structural condition. The fact that a chimney or fireplace is not functioning does not warrant its removal.
- Adding chimneys where they are not historically appropriate or in locations that require the removal of gable-end windows.
- Adding chimneys of an inappropriate building material, such as cinder block, or constructing an exposed chimney sided with wood.
- Removing distinctive design elements, such as a corbelled cap or chimney pots.

Foundations

Most historic buildings in the village rest on raised masonry foundations, whether stone, brick, or concrete. Many houses in the Bungalow, American Foursquare, and Tudor Revival styles feature such foundation elements as rusticated concrete block, and coursed stone, as an important part of the overall design of the facade. In undertaking foundation repairs, the tendency is to overstate the seriousness of foundation deterioration, and thus undertake drastic measures, such as total removal of the foundation. Instead, the historic materials should be retained, repaired as needed, or replaced with similar materials, following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, particularly Standards #2 and #6.

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Avoid:

- Removing or moving foundation enclosures unless they are deteriorated and irreparable.
- Enclosing a pier foundation with continuous infill that prevents ventilation and destroys the openness of the feature.
- Blocking up such ventilation devices as louvers, screens, or holes.
- Using a replacement infill material inappropriate to the style of the building.
- Using historically inappropriate material, such as concrete block, cinder block, stucco, or plywood as infill. Lattice infill may be historically accurate, but this should be proven through photographic research.

Garages and Barns

The older homes in the Village of Pittsford were constructed before the introduction of the automobile. Most of these modest vernacular style homes did not have a secondary structure, such as a carriage house, although there are several surviving barns within the village, reflective of the village’s agricultural heritage, and some have been adapted for automobile garage use. Detached garages were added to many of these homes where there was sufficient room on the property. These garages were typically set back at a rear corner, usually very close to the property lines. Some of these garages were moved in place or were constructed with salvaged materials, and most are very simple and plain in design.

After World War II, new neighborhoods were developed in the southwest and southeast portions of the village. These homes, often constructed on infill lots, particularly in the southeast quadrant, were designed with attached, one- or two-car garages, ushering in an era of the car, and it influenced the design and layout of these newer homes. As mentioned earlier, there are still more than a few surviving barns present on residential properties, and several have been adapted for modern re-use. Any surviving barn within the village is a unique historical asset, and every effort should be made to save these barns from demolition or inappropriate remodeling.



One of the village’s many surviving nineteenth-century horse barns.



An early twentieth-century garage retaining its original sliding doors

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Avoid:

- Adding an attached garage or an addition that extends to a detached garage to a home that pre-dates the advent of the attached garage concept, unless there is a compelling design or circumstance that would permit it.
- Adding an additional detached garage or similarly sized storage structure to a property that already has an attached garage.
- Changing the siding style or material on original barn exteriors.
- Adding ornate dormers or otherwise modifying the simple roof lines of a barn.
- Adding additions to a barn that are not stylistically compatible with the character and appearance of the barn.

Compatible Garages



This garage incorporates a roof slope and unique gable detailing matching the adjacent Queen Anne style "Gomph" house.



The garage of this house faces the side street. The rounded corners of the garage door openings mimic the porch column profile found on the house.

Compatible Garages



The garage next to this Italianate house was designed to recall a mid nineteenth-century carriage barn. Note the board-and batten siding, cross gable, cupola, and half-round windows.



When an existing severely deteriorated single-car garage was replaced with a larger two-car structure, the form, roof slope, and trim details of the original were incorporated into the new design.

Modern Amenities

Living in an historic district does not mean living in a time capsule. The APRB understands that although people live in historic houses, they usually prefer modern standards of living and security.

Technology continues to change. In the 1970s, televisions required large aerial antennas to get reception, in the 1980s and 1990s, cable television became standard, and today, some may prefer a satellite dish. What seems "essential" today will be obsolete tomorrow. Thus, all systems should be treated as temporary and installed on the historic house in the least visually obtrusive location, in a reversible manner, and with no damage to historic fabric.

Lighting - Common contemporary site lighting practices do not consider the quality of lighting and usually prescribe far more lighting than is actually needed. Most exterior lighting needs are met with high-intensity light sources, including high-pressure sodium, and metal halide lamps. These fixtures are efficient and long-lived, but can create glare, harsh industrial lighting conditions, and light pollution when not used carefully.

In general, the Village of Pittsford APRB and Planning Board do not recommend the use of **high pressure sodium light fixtures because of the poor color rendition**. The use of high-intensity lights should be limited to commercial areas. High-intensity lights must be housed in a cut-off or shielded fixture to prevent light trespass and glare.

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Exterior light fixtures should be individual point lights. Fixtures should be compatible in style with that of the building on which they are mounted or installed. Strip fluorescent light fixtures are not acceptable. Flood and spotlights should be "full cutoff" types directed at the ground of the structure. Light levels should be kept below the minimum acceptable. Consider using incandescent or warm florescent fixtures at entrances, pedestrian paths, decorative lighting, and other areas where glare and intensity will pose a nuisance.

Rewiring and refurbishment of historic original fixtures are encouraged. Quality reproductions appropriate to the building style are acceptable. If no documentation regarding the original fixtures is available, inconspicuous fixtures are preferred to inappropriately ornate or nostalgic reproductions not original to the site.

Air Conditioners and Emergency Power Generators - The installation location and screening of compressor units for central air-conditioning and emergency power generators are subject to review by the APRB. Exterior piping for central air-conditioning systems and emergency power generators should be concealed inside the building envelope, minimally visible on the exterior of the building. Piping should be concealed behind leaders. Paint piping to match surrounding materials. Screen exterior air-conditioning and emergency power generator equipment with full shrubbery or fencing consistent with the character of the house. Window air-conditioning units should be installed so that the elements of the historic windows are not damaged or removed. "Split System" or central air-conditioning removes the need for unsightly, style-marring window units.

Technology - Radio aerials and antennas and satellite dishes (and technologies not even dreamed of yet!) should not be visible from the street. Paint antennas, dishes, and cabling with colors that blend into the building. Conceal cable and security wiring behind leaders.

Avoid:

- Blocking or obscuring character-defining features.
- Removing, altering, or otherwise damaging significant architectural details when installing equipment.
- Placing equipment in plain view from the public right-of-way. Install air-conditioners and/or generators in hidden locations, such as the rear yard.

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Fencing

In the nineteenth century, fenced front yards were common, in part to keep wandering livestock out of residential yards. Over the last century, front yard fences have become much less common in the village, and only a few exist today.

The installation of a fence requires a permit from the Village Code Enforcement Officer, the style and location are subject to review by the APRB, and the Village Code requires that the "good" or finished side of a fence face outward, toward adjacent property. Rails and braces should be on the inside. The Village Code regulates the permissible height of fences, depending on location. Refer to § 98 of the Village Code: Fences, Hedges, and Structures. The Code is available online at <http://www.villageofpittsford.org/>.

Fences in rear and side yards are usually appropriate, and are most often closed or solid, to provide privacy and/or to hide parking. Closed or solid front-yard fences are historically inappropriate in front yards. The Village Code limits front-yard fences to a maximum height of three feet. If a front-yard fence is proposed, it should be open in design and lower in height, so as not to block views. Please check with the Code Enforcement Officer to determine the maximum allowable fence height for any proposed installation.

Materials - Appropriate fencing materials include wood, wrought iron, cast iron, and, in some cases, aluminum, if it simulates the appearance of wrought iron. Chain-link fencing is not appropriate in front yards or other visible locations. In some instances, chain-link fencing is permitted if it is largely out of view from the public way and is coated black or green.

Vinyl fencing materials are not permitted because their appearance is not compatible with the village's historic district. Typically, vinyl fence components are hollow with steel bar reinforcement inside the rails. Durability and panel sagging can be long-term issues with vinyl fences.

Fence construction with substitute materials, such as wood/plastic composite, fiberglass, and cellular PVC, that are solid, are assembled in the same manner as wood, and can be painted, may be appropriate if the style of fence is appropriate and/or does not exceed the structural limitations of the material. Good examples would include wood composite and solid cellular PVC.

Pressure-treated lumber is a common and inexpensive material that can work well for fence construction, provided that it is painted or stained after installation. Cedar is another common fence material. Cedar is more costly, but it is more stable and tends to warp and crack less than pressure-treated lumber.

Style - Prefabricated fencing is much less costly than custom constructed fencing. However, stock lumberyard styles are limited, and the quality and lightweight materials are usually not very durable.

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Ornamental or period-style fencing that is low and features boxed and capped posts, close spaced pickets or balusters, and fence sections that mount between the posts, leaving the appearance of the fence identical from both sides, is appropriate for front-yard and side-yard settings in the village. Higher fencing designed for privacy, where rails and braces are mounted outside the posts and the panels are essentially solid, is more appropriate in a rear-yard setting, and perhaps a side-yard setting, if the height is reduced.

The style and age of the house, the character of the surrounding neighborhood, and other landscape and garden features are all important factors to look at when picking a style of fence. Some settings may suggest a formal, painted fence, one that ties in with the style of the house. In other instances, a less formal, natural wood color fence, one that is short in length or is incorporated into an overall landscape concept in a back yard, may be appropriate.

Split rail or ranch-style fencing may be appropriate in a rural or Postwar neighborhood setting, but is seldom functional or appropriate in the older, higher density neighborhoods in the village.

Paint and Color

Maintenance - No other single maintenance issue so drives homeowners to seek out inappropriate alterations and improvements to their historic property than does that of peeling paint. Nearly all historic structures require some sort of painting maintenance, even masonry structures have window and some trim components that require painting.

There are many reasons why paint fails on historic structures, enough so that entire books have been written about it. A few of the most common causes and their remedies are described below. Painting is a fact of life when owning an historic building.

- Minimize moisture in your house by venting bathrooms, kitchens, and appliances.
- Keep your basement dry by installing a sump pump, venting it during summer months (wet season) and ensuring that the grade around your house drains away from your house.
- Clean and inspect your gutters and downspouts in the spring and fall. Make sure your downspout extensions are either tied into a storm drain or carry the water away from your house.
- Invest in proper surface preparation before painting especially when oil paint exists below more recent latex paints.

Color - The APRB does not regulate paint because it is a temporary material. A building must be repainted every seven to ten years. The APRB does recommend considering the age and style of

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your building or house before selecting colors. Information on appropriate colors for each period and style is available at the Village Hall.

Permanent colors do require approval by the APRB. Stone, brick, slate, exposed concrete block, stucco, pre-finished metals, and other similar materials are all considered permanent colors that require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the APRB.