

Wood Siding Repair and Replacement Policy

Adopted by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, 6/7/18

Commission on Chicago Landmarks staff will continue to review the proposed repair and replacement of historic wood siding per the Clapboards Guideline adopted in 1992:

Clapboards: Many historic frame buildings are covered by newer, supposedly maintenance-free, synthetic siding. Hidden beneath asphalt or asbestos shingles and, more recently, aluminum or vinyl siding are often the original wood clapboards or shingles, corner boards, and accompanying trim that are critical features of frame construction. Often this original material is in good-to-excellent condition, although in need of paint. Original siding must be retained and repaired rather than replaced with new material where restoration is feasible. Where original elements have been removed and replacement is necessary, the size and proportions of the missing elements must be duplicated. The outlines of missing pieces can often be deduced from the markings these materials have left on the underlying sheathing boards, from old photographs, or from similar structures in the area which have retained their original materials.

U. S. Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation #6, adopted by the Commission, requires that:

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.

Substitute Material:

For elevations where non-combustible cladding is mandated to meet code requirements, smooth-surfaced, fire-resistant siding with a lap exposure to match historic shall be approved.

For secondary elevations that are minimally visible from streets/sidewalks within the district, Commission staff may approve replacement of missing siding or wood siding deteriorated beyond repair with smooth-surfaced, cementitious siding with a lap exposure to match historic. For front and highly visible secondary elevations where original siding is missing or deteriorated beyond repair, Commission staff shall only approve wood siding to match historic.

Commission staff will take the following factors into consideration when determining whether a secondary elevation is minimally visible from the public way:

- Setback of structure from public way;
- Setback of structure relative to that of adjacent structures;
- Distance between structure and adjacent structures; and
- Any architectural elements on elevations which may prevent view of the façade located behind (such as bays, chimneys, changes in plane, etc.).