Historic Design Review Guidelines Update

September 2025

WHAT WE'LL COVER

1. **What we did and why**
   A. Purpose and goals for the update
   B. What the update can/cannot do
   C. Process to date
2. **What we heard**
3. **What you'll see in the update**
4. **What is next**

Mobile's tradition of historic preservation and architectural review goes back to the early 1960s. The Guidelines have been updated several times to include the most current professional guidance as laid out by the National Park Service. They were first revised in 2000, and again in 2016. It has been almost 10 years since they were last updated.

Historic Design Review Guidelines Update

What we did and why

PURPOSE

Update the Mobile Historic District Guidelines to make them more effective, while retaining and improving upon previous editions.

The focus of the effort was to:

1. Reorganize and edit to streamline and make the document more user-friendly
2. Clarify language to make the guidelines easier to interpret
3. Remove contradictory guidelines and reduce conflicts with other city policies and ordinances
4. Comply with standards set by the Secretary of the Interior

WHAT THE GUIDELINES CAN/CANNOT DO

Can

- ✔ Provide clear design guidance for exterior changes to historic properties
- ✔ Ensure new construction, additions, and alterations are compatible with historic character
- ✔ Offer predictability for property owners, developers, and the community
- ✔ Protect and enhance community identity and cultural heritage
- ✔ Support property values and long-term investment in historic districts

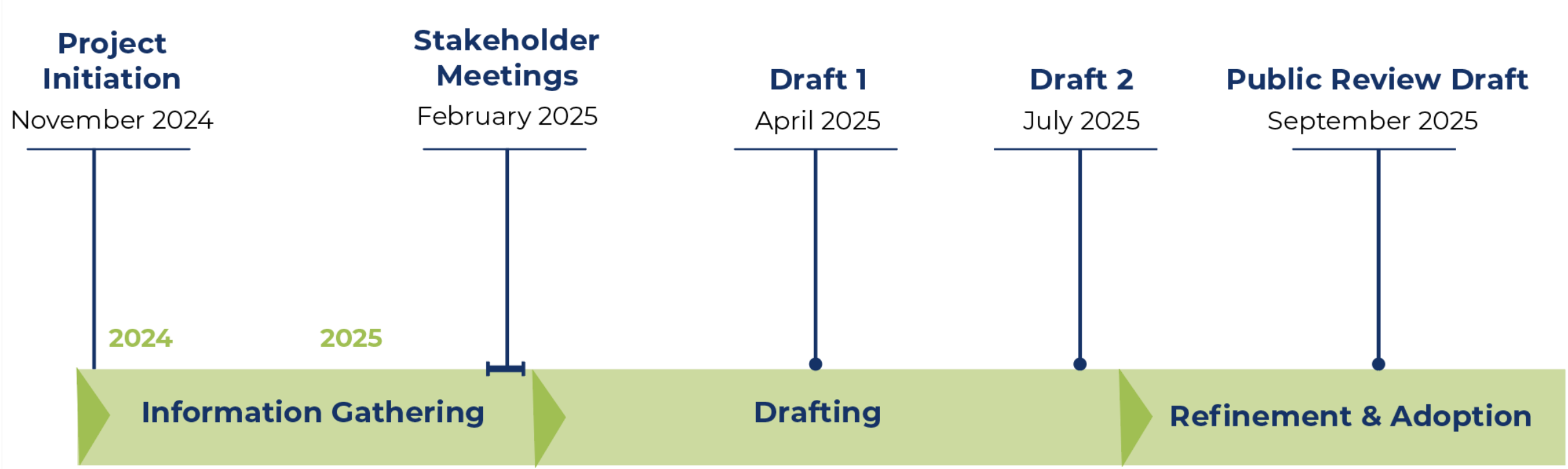
Cannot

- ✘ Remove existing property rights or force existing development to change
- ✘ Prevent all change or require properties to be “frozen in time”
- ✘ Control property use (that is handled by zoning)
- ✘ Guarantee project approval—final decisions rest with the ARB
- ✘ Override the building code, zoning code, or other regulations

STANDARDS OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

These Design Guidelines are based on the Secretary of the Interior's 10 Standards for Rehabilitation as published by the National Park Service.

PROJECT TIMELINE



Historic Design Review Guidelines Update

What we heard

GROUPS ENGAGED

WHAT WE HEARD

About the Process/Usability

1. Not user-friendly
2. Confusion about the process
3. Confusion about roles of review entities
4. Confusion about which properties must comply

About the Guidelines

1. Contradictions and unclear/ambiguous terms
2. Need to reflect technological advancements
3. Need more Mobile example photos, more examples of appropriate new construction
4. Clarification on demolitions, landscaping and lighting

Historic Design Review Guidelines Update

What you'll see in the update

WHAT YOU'LL SEE IN THE UPDATE

- **Redesigned document with simplified organization**: easier for future updates
- **Reduced text**: eliminated redundancy
- **More charts and diagrams:** improved clarity and usability
- **New photos:** improved clarity and better reflects Mobile's character
- **Alternatives to window materials:** address new technology and flexibility
- **Clarifications to roofs, fences, and signs:** reduce ambiguity and conflict with zoning

SIMPLIFIED ORGANIZATION

2016: 13 chapters

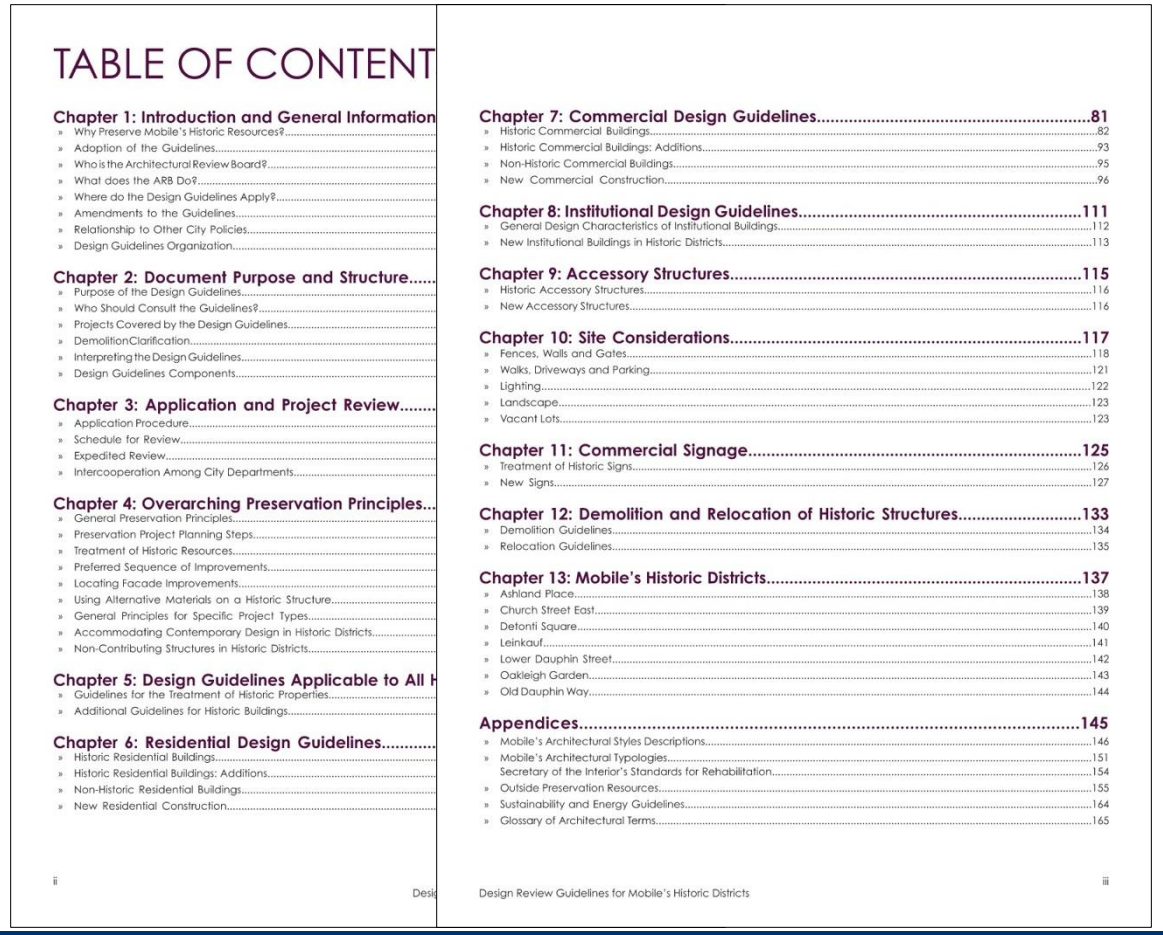


TABLE OF CONTENT

2025

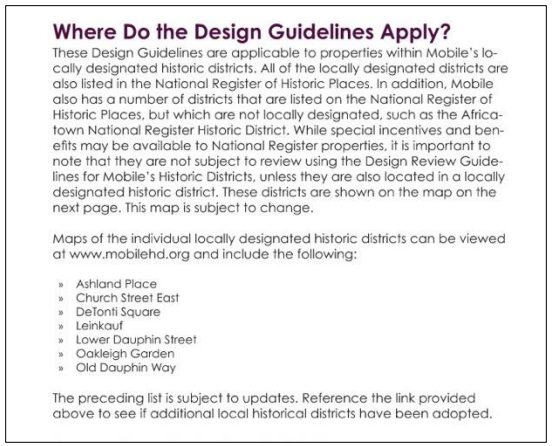
1. Introduction
2. Guidelines for Existing Buildings
3. Guidelines for New Construction
4. Guidelines for Demolitions and Relocations

Appendices

REDUCED TEXT

Example: Who should consult the guidelines?

2016: Three pages in two chapters



Where Do the Design Guidelines Apply?

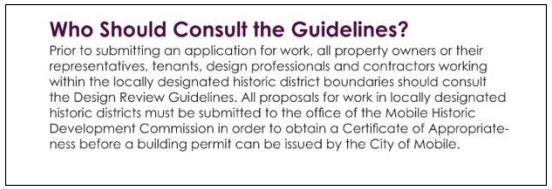
These Design Guidelines are applicable to properties within Mobile's locally designated historic districts. All of the locally designated districts are also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, Mobile also has a number of districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but which are not locally designated, such as the Africatown National Register Historic District. While special incentives and benefits may be available to National Register properties, it is important to note that they are not subject to review using the Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts, unless they are also located in a locally designated historic district. These districts are shown on the map on the next page. This map is subject to change.

Maps of the individual locally designated historic districts can be viewed at www.mobilehd.org and include the following:

- Ashland Place
- Church Street East
- DeTonti Square
- Leinkauf
- Lower Dauphin Street
- Oakleigh Garden
- Old Dauphin Way

The preceding list is subject to updates. Reference the link provided above to see if additional local historical districts have been adopted.

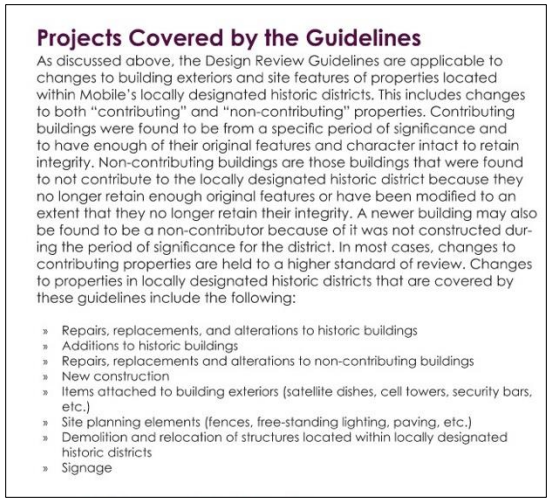
Chapter 1, page 3



Who Should Consult the Guidelines?

Prior to submitting an application for work, all property owners or their representatives, tenants, design professionals and contractors working within the locally designated historic district boundaries should consult the Design Review Guidelines. All proposals for work in locally designated historic districts must be submitted to the office of the Mobile Historic Development Commission in order to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness before a building permit can be issued by the City of Mobile.

Chapter 2, page 10



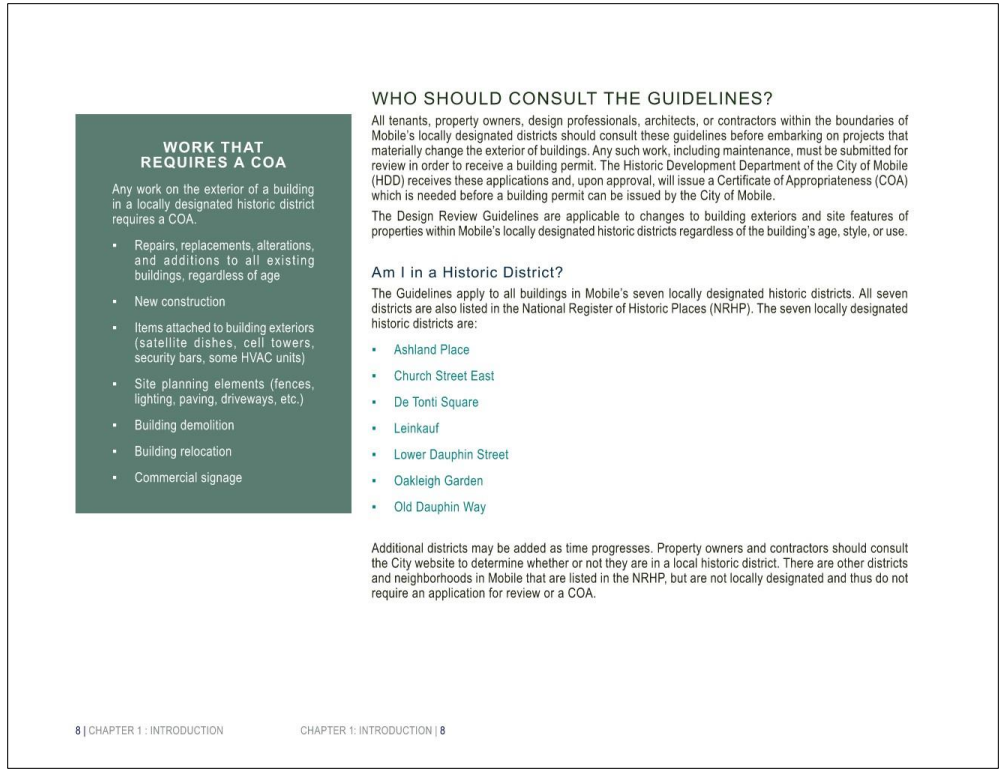
Projects Covered by the Guidelines

As discussed above, the Design Review Guidelines are applicable to changes to building exteriors and site features of properties located within Mobile's locally designated historic districts. This includes changes to both "contributing" and "non-contributing" properties. Contributing buildings were found to be from a specific period of significance and to have enough of their original features and character intact to retain integrity. Non-contributing buildings are those buildings that were found to not contribute to the locally designated historic district because they no longer retain enough original features or have been modified to an extent that they no longer retain their integrity. A newer building may also be found to be a non-contributor because of it was not constructed during the period of significance for the district. In most cases, changes to contributing properties are held to a higher standard of review. Changes to properties in locally designated historic districts that are covered by these guidelines include the following:

- Repairs, replacements, and alterations to historic buildings
- Additions to historic buildings
- Repairs, replacements and alterations to non-contributing buildings
- New construction
- Items attached to building exteriors (satellite dishes, cell towers, security bars, etc.)
- Site planning elements (fences, free-standing lighting, paving, etc.)
- Demolition and relocation of structures located within locally designated historic districts
- Signage

Chapter 2, page 11

2025: One page



WORK THAT REQUIRES A COA

Any work on the exterior of a building in a locally designated historic district requires a COA.

- Repairs, replacements, alterations, and additions to all existing buildings, regardless of age
- New construction
- Items attached to building exteriors (satellite dishes, cell towers, security bars, some HVAC units)
- Site planning elements (fences, lighting, paving, driveways, etc.)
- Building demolition
- Building relocation
- Commercial signage

WHO SHOULD CONSULT THE GUIDELINES?

All tenants, property owners, design professionals, architects, or contractors within the boundaries of Mobile's locally designated districts should consult these guidelines before embarking on projects that materially change the exterior of buildings. Any such work, including maintenance, must be submitted for review in order to receive a building permit. The Historic Development Department of the City of Mobile (HDD) receives these applications and, upon approval, will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) which is needed before a building permit can be issued by the City of Mobile.

The Design Review Guidelines are applicable to changes to building exteriors and site features of properties within Mobile's locally designated historic districts regardless of the building's age, style, or use.

Am I in a Historic District?

The Guidelines apply to all buildings in Mobile's seven locally designated historic districts. All seven districts are also listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The seven locally designated historic districts are:

- Ashland Place
- Church Street East
- De Tonti Square
- Leinkauf
- Lower Dauphin Street
- Oakleigh Garden
- Old Dauphin Way

Additional districts may be added as time progresses. Property owners and contractors should consult the City website to determine whether or not they are in a local historic district. There are other districts and neighborhoods in Mobile that are listed in the NRHP, but are not locally designated and thus do not require an application for review or a COA.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | 8

Chapter 1, page 8

CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS

Example: When to use alternative materials

2016

Using Alternative Materials on a Historic Structure

The Design Review Guidelines sometimes refer to the use of alternative materials when describing the appropriate treatment of building features and components, such as moldings, windows, siding and other architectural details.

Alternative materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis as replacement materials or for use on a new addition or new building in a historic district. The ARB will consider factors as described below.

Potential Impact on Historic Significance

Removing original material diminishes the integrity of a historic property by reducing the percentage of building fabric that remains from the period of historic significance. Retaining the original material is always preferred. If this is not feasible, alternative materials may be considered. When used, an alternative material should convey the character, including detail and finish, of the original to the greatest extent feasible.

Durability

An alternative material should have proven durability in similar applications. While some new materials are very durable, others may degrade quickly and can be difficult to repair (i.e. vinyl windows).

Appearance

An alternative material should have a similar profile, texture and finish as the original material. Some synthetic siding has an exaggerated, rusticated finish that is an inaccurate representation of original clapboard, and many vinyl products have a sheen that is out of character with that of painted wood and metal.

Location

Up close, it is easier to identify some alternative materials due to differences in texture, finish and feel. Tapping on a hollow plastic column or fence does not convey the same experience as the original. For this reason, locations that are more remote are better. Similarly, use of alternative materials is more appropriate on non-primary façades. See "Locating Façade Improvements" on the previous page for more information.

Cost

Some alternative materials are promoted because their initial costs appear to be less than repairing or replacing the original. When the other qualities of appearance and durability are proven, then the less expensive option may be appropriate. However, long-term, "life cycle" costs should also be weighed. Sometimes, the up-front saving is deceptive.

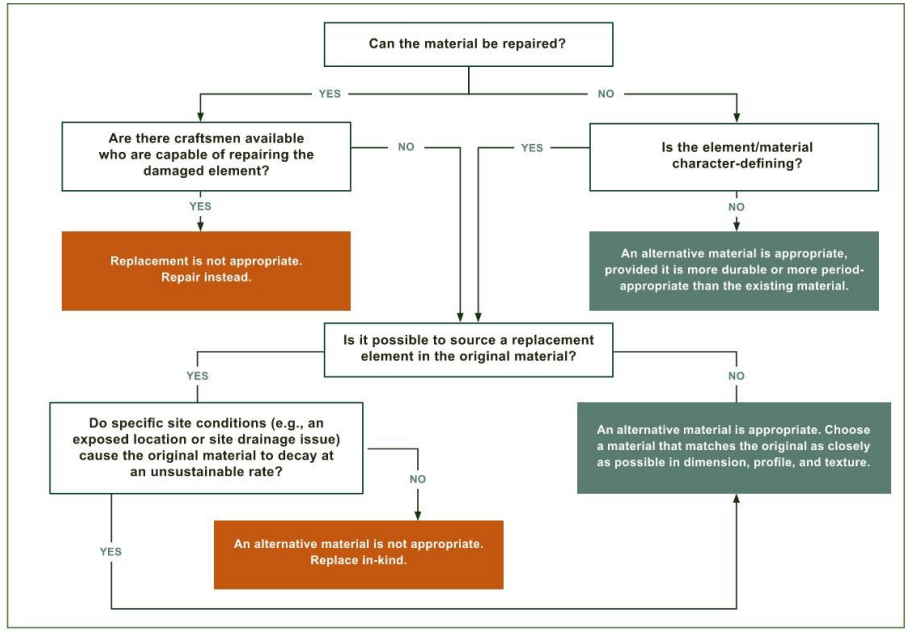
Environmental Impacts

The potential environmental impacts of alternative materials should also be considered including impacts associated with manufacture, transport, installation and ability to recycle.

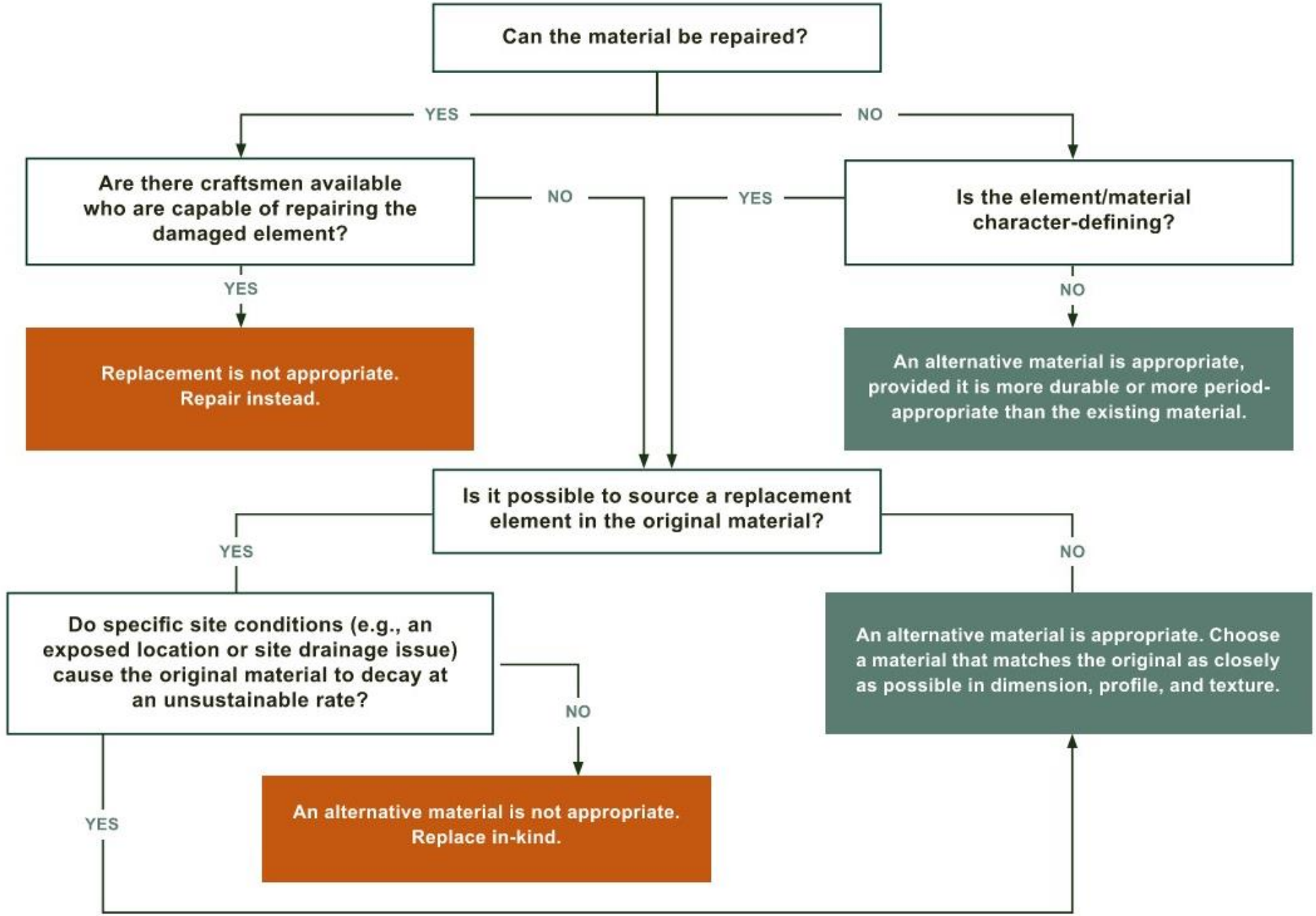
Interaction with Historic Building Materials

Some alternative materials may interact negatively with historic materials. For example, some metals may corrode and stain original materials and some window and siding materials may expand and contract with temperature changes in ways that degrade weather-protection properties.

2025



Alternative Materials Flow Chart


Can the material be repaired?
YES
NO
Are there craftsmen available who are capable of repairing the damaged element?
NO
YES
Is the element/material character-defining?
YES
NO
Replacement is not appropriate. Repair instead.
An alternative material is appropriate, provided it is more durable or more period-appropriate than the existing material.
Is it possible to source a replacement element in the original material?
YES
NO
Do specific site conditions (e.g., an exposed location or site drainage issue) cause the original material to decay at an unsustainable rate?
NO
YES
An alternative material is not appropriate. Replace in-kind.
An alternative material is appropriate. Choose a material that matches the original as closely as possible in dimension, profile, and texture.

MORE PHOTOS AND DIAGRAMS

Example: Guidelines for Residential Additions

2016

Historic Residential Buildings: Additions

This section presents design guidelines for the construction of additions to locally designated historic residential structures. The Architectural Review Board recognizes that for buildings to remain useful, additions are sometimes necessary. Any addition to a historic residential landmark and to a contributing residential structures in a locally designated historic district should be compatible with the existing structure and surrounding context.

Note that treatment of an existing addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right should follow the guidelines above and the guidelines presented in Chapter 5.

General Guidelines

The size of a building is determined by its dimensions - height, width, and depth - which also dictate the building's square footage. Building mass is established by the arrangement and proportion of its basic geometric components - the main building, wings and porches, the roof and the foundation. Similarity of massing helps create a rhythm along a street, which is one of the appealing aspects of historic districts. Scale refers to a building's size in relationship to other buildings - large, medium, or small. To preserve the continuity of a historic district, additions to existing buildings should be in scale with the original building as well as adjacent properties.

- Design an addition so there is the least possible loss of historic fabric and so the character-defining features of the historic building are not destroyed, damaged or obscured.
- Design an addition so that the overall characteristics of the site (site topography, character-defining site features, trees, and significant district vistas and public views) are retained.
- Wherever possible, construct an addition in such a manner that, if the addition were to be removed, the essential form and integrity of the historic structure would be unimpaired.
- Design an addition to be compatible with the color, material and character of the property, neighborhood and environment.
- Design the building components (roof, foundation, doors and windows) of the addition to be compatible with the historic architecture.
- Maintain the relationship of solids to voids (windows and doors) in an exterior wall as is established by the historic building.
- Differentiate an addition from a historic structure using changes in material, color and/or wall plane. Alternative materials, such as cement fiberboard, are allowed when the addition is properly differentiated from the original structure.
- If the style of an addition is different than the original, use a style that is compatible with the historic context.

Place an addition so that it is subordinate to the historic residential structure by having a break in the wall plane, and stepping back the addition from the primary facade.

Designing an Addition

Additions to historic residential buildings are sometimes designed to appear similar in style and character as the original historic building. When this design approach is pursued, it is critical that the addition is clearly differentiated from the original building. In other cases, additions are designed with a style and character that is clearly different from the design of the original historic building. When employing a differentiated design for an addition, use a design that is compatible with the mass and scale of the original historic building.

Building Placement and Orientation

This section addresses the placement and orientation of an addition relative to the existing historic structure and its site. An addition should be located in a manner that minimally impacts the existing historic structure.

6.9 Place an addition so that it is subordinate to the historic residential structure.

- Place and design an addition to the rear or side of the historic building wherever possible.
- Place a vertical addition in the rear so it is not visible from the street.

Massing and Scale

This section addresses the massing and scale of additions relative to the existing historic structure. The massing and scale of additions should minimize visual impacts to the historic structure and remain subordinate to the original structure.

6.10 Design an addition to be compatible in massing and scale with the original historic structure.

- Design the massing of an addition to appear subordinate to the historic building.
- Where feasible, use a lower-scale connecting element to join an addition to a historic structure.
- Where possible, match the foundation and floor heights of an addition to those of the historic building.

Design the massing of an addition to appear subordinate to the historic building. Where possible, use a lower scale linking element to join an addition to a historic structure, as shown in this photo.

MORE ILLUSTRATION

Example: Guidelines for Residential Additions

2025

Appropriate Residential Addition

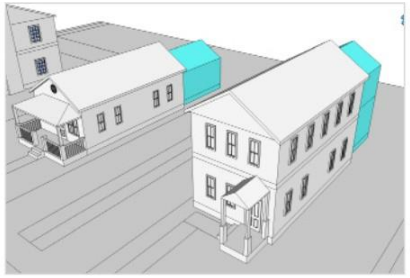
Additions to historic residential buildings should be clearly differentiated from the original structure and be subordinately scaled as illustrated to the left. Where space is available, additions should be located at the rear of the building, feature a similar or smaller footprint, and have a similar roof type and pitch.

Two-story additions may be appropriate for single-story buildings, but should be located at the rear of the building and include a transitory space such as a hallway that helps to differentiate the addition from the attached building while minimizing its larger massing and size.

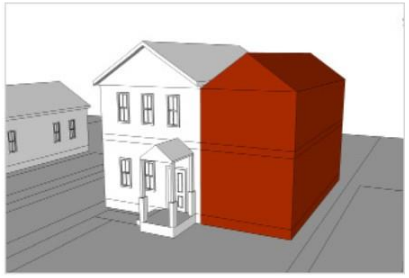
Inappropriate Residential Addition

While side additions may be appropriate in some cases, they should be subordinate in size and scale to the attached historic building. While the side addition in this example includes similar rectangular forms, foundation heights, floor-to-floor heights, and a similar roof type and pitch, the addition nearly doubles the size of the attached historic building.

Additionally, side elevations run the risk of removing significant architectural features which may be highly visible from the street. Additions should avoid removing character-defining features to the greatest extent possible.



Whenever possible, locate additions to the rear of a property.



Size and orient a side addition so that it does not overwhelm the original structure.

Inappropriate Side Addition

Side additions should be recessed behind the front wall plane of the original structure. This addition obscures the front porch of this contributing residence.

Appropriate Rear Addition

When possible, locate additions to the rear of a contributing property. Despite being taller than the main house, this rear addition is not easily visible from the street.

STREAMLINED ORGANIZATION

WINDOWS IN EXISTING BUILDINGS 2016

Staff Assistance

MHDC staff can provide applicants and/or contractors with literature that can guide them as to the repair of windows.

After-the-Fact Approvals

An alteration that is made without an approval may be required to be removed. Any after-the-fact approval, if it is granted, will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The replacement window used after the fact shall match the original window as per location, installation, framing, light configuration, and material.

Windows

The type, size, framing, and dividing lights of windows, as well as their location and configuration (rhythm), help establish the historic character of a building. Original window components should be retained to the extent possible. The character-defining features of a window should be preserved. Historic windows can be repaired through re-glazing and patching and splicing wood elements such as muntins, frame sill and casing. Repair and weatherization is generally more energy efficient and less expensive than replacement. Windows should be in character with the historic building.

For most contributing properties in historic districts, the windows that are on the front elevation and those on the sidewalls that are visible from the street will be the most important to preserve. Windows in other locations that have distinctive designs and that represent fine craftsmanship may also be important to preserve.

5.20 Preserve the functional historic and decorative features of a historic window.

- Where historic (wooden or metal) windows are intact and in repairable condition, retain and repair them to match the existing as per location, light configuration, detail and material.
- Preserve historic window features, including the frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, operation, and groupings of windows.
- Repair, rather than replace, frames and sashes, wherever possible.
- For repair of window components, epoxies and related products may serve as effective solutions to material deterioration and operational malfunction.

5.21 When historic windows are not in a repairable condition, match the replacement window design to the original.

- In instances where there is a request to replace a building's windows, the new windows shall match the existing as per location, framing, and light configuration.
- Use any salvageable window components on a primary elevation.

Preserve historic window features, including the frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, operation, and groupings of windows.

Where historic windows are intact and in repairable condition, retain and repair them to match the existing context. This includes location, light configuration, detail, and material.

Identify the architectural window patterns and styles of the historic home. When repairing, preserving, or replacing, it is critical to match the window features to display an accurate sense of history.

5.22 When a historic window is missing on a key character-defining wall, use a historically accurate replacement.

- Historically accurate light patterns shall be employed. Use photographic, physical, and/or documentary evidence for the design.
- A new window shall be installed in such a manner as to fit within the original window opening and match in depth and filling of the reveal. A reveal is the part of the side of a window opening that is between the outer surface of the wall and the window.
- A doubled-paned or clad wood window may be considered as a replacement alternative only if the replacement matches the configuration, dimensions, and profiles of original windows.
- For increased efficiency, storm windows can be installed. A storm window shall fit within the window reveal and avoid damaging window casings. Operable storm windows are encouraged.

Window Replacement Schedule

Applications involving wholesale replacement of wooden windows must include a window schedule. This includes photographs of each window documenting the condition. Staff can provide applicants with a window schedule tailored to their property's fenestration. If the degree of deterioration is substantiated by a window schedule, replacement may be approved for designs matching originals as per window type, installation, and light configuration. Doubled-paned and clad wood windows replacement alternatives may be considered if the replacements match the configuration, dimensions and profiles.

ACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS

Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in texture, profile and finish to the original are acceptable. These often include:

- Wood sash
- Steel, if original to structure
- Custom extruded aluminum
- Aluminum clad wood
- Windows approved by the National Park Service

UNACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS

Materials that do not appear similar to the original in texture, profile and finish are unacceptable. These often include:

- Vinyl
- Mill-finished aluminum
- Interior snap-in muntins (except when used in concert with exterior muntins and intervening dividers)

A new window shall be installed in such a manner as to fit within the original window opening and match in depth and filling of the reveal.

Chapter 5, pages 40-41

Windows

A window in a new addition should be compatible with the size, placement and rhythm of those on the historic building.

6.21 Design a window on an addition to be compatible with the original historic building.

- Size, place and space a window for an addition to be in character with the original historic building.
- If an aluminum window is used, use dimensions that are similar to the original windows of the house. An extruded custom aluminum window approved by the NPS or an aluminum clad wood window may be used, provided it has a profile, dimension and durability similar to a window in the historic building.

Shutters and Awnings

This section provides guidelines for shutters and awnings on additions to historic residential structures. Shutters and awnings should be compatible with the existing historic building.

6.22 Choose shutters for additions that are compatible with those on the existing historic building.

- Match a shutter on an addition to those on the original historic building.
- Use an operable shutter wherever possible.
- If a shutter is fixed, place it on a window casing in a manner to replicate an operable shutter.
- Use a decorative shutter only if they are used on the original historic building.

6.23 Choose an awning that is compatible with the original historic building, the addition and the neighborhood.

- Fabric awnings are appropriate.

Storm Safety Features

This section provides design guidelines for storm safety features on additions to historic residential buildings.

6.24 Minimize the visual impacts of a storm safety feature on an addition.

- Choose and install a storm window to be as unobtrusive as possible to the window.

ACCEPTABLE STORM SAFETY FEATURE MATERIALS FOR AN ADDITION

Materials that are compatible with the original structure and the district in finish and texture are acceptable. These often include:

- Aluminum (with finish to match sash color)
- Wood
- Vinyl
- Metal with baked enamel or anodized of appropriate color

UNACCEPTABLE STORM SAFETY FEATURE MATERIALS FOR AN ADDITION

Materials that are not compatible with the original structure and district in finish and texture are unacceptable. These often include:

- Mill finish aluminum

Piers, Foundations and Foundation Infill

This section provides guidelines for piers, foundations and foundation infill related to alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts. These features should be compatible with surrounding structures and the district.

6.31 Design a foundation to be consistent with those in the district and use a durable foundation material on all sides of a building.

Details and Ornamentation

This section provides guidelines for details and ornamentation related to alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts. Details and ornamentation should not adversely impact the surrounding structures or the district.

6.32 Design details and ornamentation to minimize impacts to the historic district.

- Design details and ornamentation at a scale that is consistent with details and ornamentation on historic buildings in the district.

Windows

This section provides guidelines for windows related to alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts. The number and placement of windows is usually a major design element for residential structures, including additions. Windows should also be compatible with the neighborhood.

6.33 Design window alterations and windows on new additions to non-historic structures to be compatible with the neighborhood.

- Use a material and window type that is similar to those seen historically in the neighborhood. Tempered glass will be considered when required by the Mobile Code of Ordinances.

Design details and ornamentation at a scale that is consistent with details and ornamentation on historic buildings in the district.

Design windows on new additions to non-historic structures that are compatible with the neighborhood.

Chapter 6, pages 61 & 65

Preserve and repair an original detail or ornamentation on a historic commercial building.

Use large panes of glass that fit the original opening for a display window.

Do not alter the original shape of a window.

Windows

This section provides guidelines for windows on historic commercial buildings. Windows are a key-character defining feature of historic commercial buildings. The placement, orientation and size of windows both on the ground floor and the upper floor significantly impact the appearance of the building and the streetscape. Windows in historic commercial buildings should be preserved.

7.18 Preserve and repair an original detail or ornamentation on a historic commercial building.

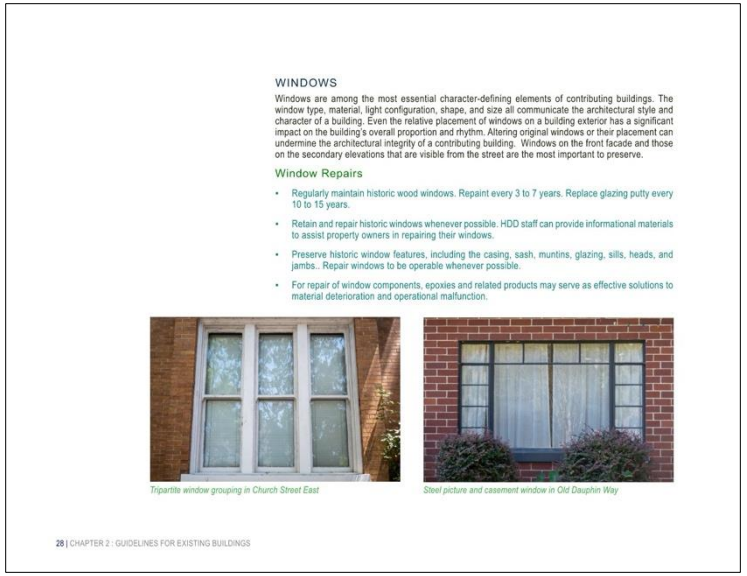
- Maintain the original space patterns and location of windows. Most display windows have a bulkhead below and a transom above.
- Preserve the size and shape of an upper story window.
- Consider maintaining a Carrara glass or glass block storefront if it has attained historic significance as an alteration.

7.19 If required, replace original historic windows to be compatible with the windows on the original historic building.

- Use large panes of glass that fit the original opening for a display window. Where a display window is no longer required, the ARB will consider an alternative design.
- Do not use opaque treatments for a window, including black plexiglass. Do not paint a window.
- Do not use reflective mirror glass for a window.
- Unless evidence exists from existing buildings or historic photographs, do not use a multi-pane design that divides the storefront window into smaller components.
- Use a tempered glass window if required by the building code.
- Reopen an upper story window if it is blocked.
- If reopening an upper story window is not feasible, use a fixed shutter to define the original proportion of the window opening.

Chapter 7, page 90

WINDOWS IN EXISTING BUILDINGS 2025



WINDOWS

Windows are among the most essential character-defining elements of contributing buildings. The window type, material, light configuration, shape, and size all communicate the architectural style and character of a building. Even the relative placement of windows on a building exterior has a significant impact on the building's overall proportion and rhythm. Altering original windows or their placement can undermine the architectural integrity of a contributing building. Windows on the front facade and those on the secondary elevations that are visible from the street are the most important to preserve.

Window Repairs

- Regularly maintain historic wood windows. Repaint every 3 to 7 years. Replace glazing putty every 10 to 15 years.
- Retain and repair historic windows whenever possible. HDD staff can provide informational materials to assist property owners in repairing their windows.
- Preserve historic window features, including the casing, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, heads, and jambs.. Repair windows to be operable whenever possible.
- For repair of window components, epoxies and related products may serve as effective solutions to material deterioration and operational malfunction.

Tripartite window grouping in Church Street East

Steel picture and casement window in Old Dauphin Way

28 | CHAPTER 2 : GUIDELINES FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS

Chapter 2, pages 27-32

Window Anatomy

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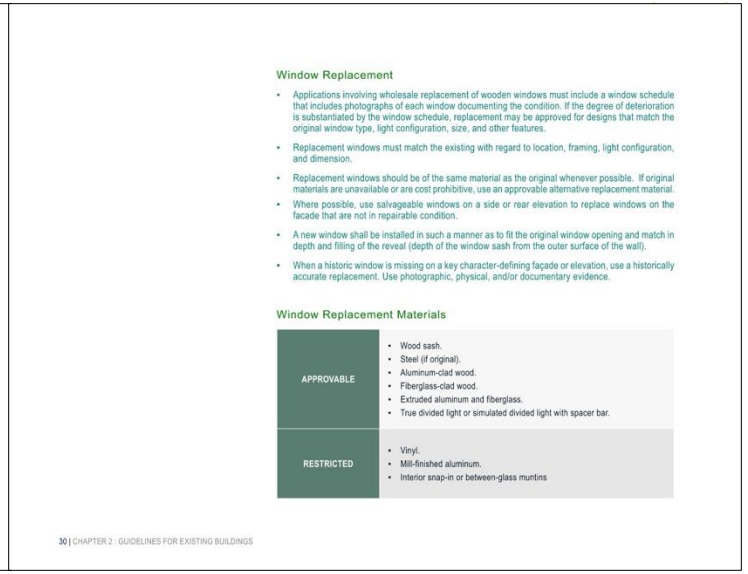

Window Replacement

- Applications involving wholesale replacement of wooden windows must include a window schedule that includes photographs of each window documenting the condition. If the degree of deterioration is substantiated by the window schedule, replacement may be approved for designs that match the original window type, light configuration, size, and other features.
- Replacement windows must match the existing with regard to location, framing, light configuration, and dimension.
- Replacement windows should be of the same material as the original whenever possible. If original materials are unavailable or are cost prohibitive, use an approvable alternative replacement material.
- Where possible, use salvageable windows on a side or rear elevation to replace windows on the facade that are not in repairable condition.
- A new window shall be installed in such a manner as to fit the original window opening and match in depth and filling of the reveal (depth of the window sash from the outer surface of the wall).
- When a historic window is missing on a key character-defining façade or elevation, use a historically accurate replacement. Use photographic, physical, and/or documentary evidence.

Window Replacement Materials

APPROVABLE	• Wood sash. • Steel (if original). • Aluminum-clad wood. • Fiberglass-clad wood. • Extruded aluminum and fiberglass. • True divided light or simulated divided light with spacer bar.
RESTRICTED	• Vinyl. • Mill-finished aluminum. • Interior snap-in or between-glass muntins

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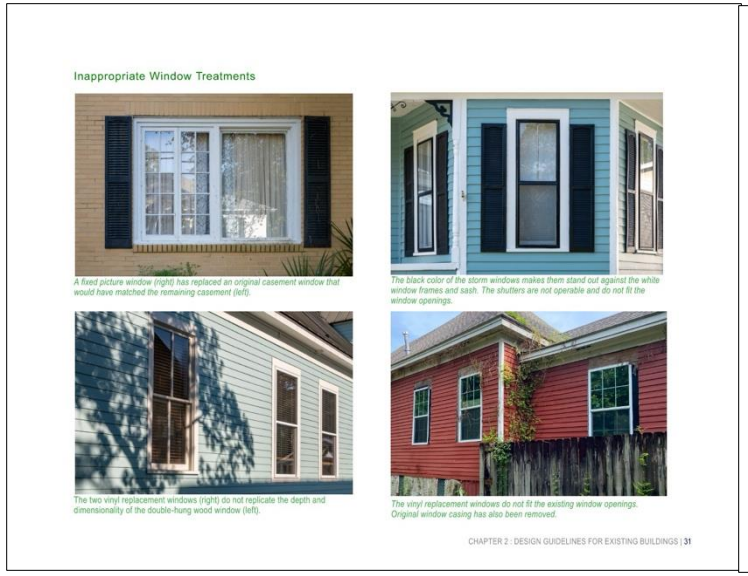

Inappropriate Window Treatments

A fixed picture window (right) has replaced an original casement window that would have matched the remaining casement (left).

The black color of the storm windows makes them stand out against the white window frames and sash. The shutters are not operable and do not fit the window openings.

The two vinyl replacement windows (right) do not replicate the depth and dimensionality of the double-hung wood window (left).

The vinyl replacement windows do not fit the existing window openings. Original window casing has also been removed.

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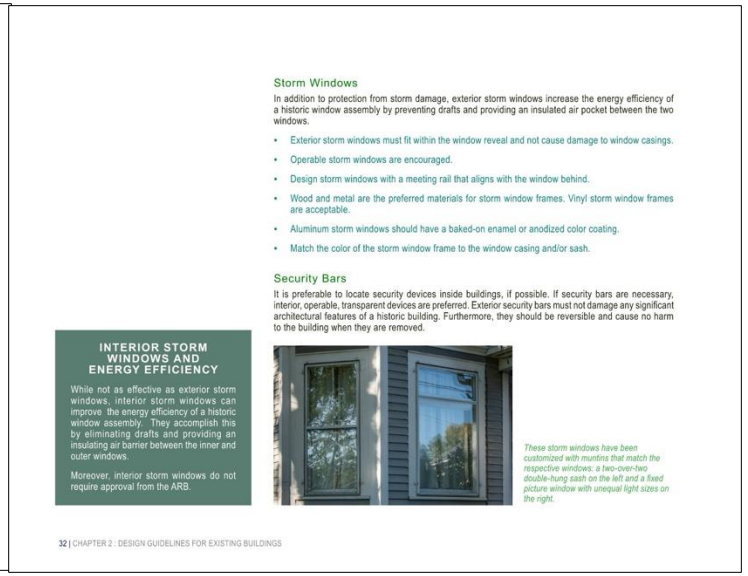

Storm Windows

In addition to protection from storm damage, exterior storm windows increase the energy efficiency of a historic window assembly by preventing drafts and providing an insulated air pocket between the two windows.

- Exterior storm windows must fit within the window reveal and not cause damage to window casings.
- Operable storm windows are encouraged.
- Design storm windows with a meeting rail that aligns with the window behind.
- Wood and metal are the preferred materials for storm window frames. Vinyl storm window frames are acceptable.
- Aluminum storm windows should have a baked-on enamel or anodized color coating.
- Match the color of the storm window frame to the window casing and/or sash.

Security Bars

It is preferable to locate security devices inside buildings, if possible. If security bars are necessary, interior, operable, transparent devices are preferred. Exterior security bars must not damage any significant architectural features of a historic building. Furthermore, they should be reversible and cause no harm to the building when they are removed.

INTERIOR STORM WINDOWS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

While not as effective as exterior storm windows, interior storm windows can improve the energy efficiency of a historic window assembly. They accomplish this by eliminating drafts and providing an insulating air barrier between the inner and outer windows.

Moreover, interior storm windows do not require approval from the ARB.

These storm windows have been customized with muntins that match the respective windows: a two-over-two double-hung sash on the left and a fixed picture window with unequal light sizes on the right.

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ADDED INFORMATION FOR CLARIFICATION

Example: Cleaning and painting exteriors

2016

PAINT

Historically, most wood surfaces on the exteriors of buildings were painted to protect them from weathering. Concrete and stucco structures were mostly scored and painted. Use of color and color schemes that reflect a building's predominant historic period are encouraged. A painting project should reflect the historic character of the property and of the district. Paint colors and schemes will generally be approved if it is in keeping with the historic style and period of the building and the neighborhood.

5.9 Plan repainting carefully.

- The utilization of period color and paint schemes that reflect the historic character of the property is encouraged.
- Always prepare a good substrate.
- Prior to painting, remove damaged or deteriorated paint only to the next intact layer, using the gentlest means possible.
- Use compatible paints. Some latex paints will not bond well to earlier oil-based paints without a primer coat.

2025: Simplified and clarified

Cleaning Historic Exteriors

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards state instruct that historic materials should be cleaned using the gentlest method possible. While a dirty building may be less attractive than a clean one, most forms of soiling and staining will not damage the effected material. In contrast, harsh cleaning methods - including high-pressure washing, sandblasting, and certain chemical cleaning - can remove historic material and cause long term, irreversible harm to stucco, brick, stone, and siding. Consult HDD staff for recommendations for cleaning different exterior building materials. Before using any chemical cleaner, read the manufacturer's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) to determine proper handling and application

- Do not clean masonry that has failed or eroding mortar joints.
- First try a low-pressure water wash, preferably under 300 psi and not to exceed 600 psi.
- Use a neutral biocide - such as D/2 Biological Solution - to treat biological growth and staining.
- If stained masonry requires additional cleaning, select a chemical formulated specifically for historic masonry. Test chemical cleaners in a small area out of prominent view.
- Do not use acidic cleaners (pH <7) on glazed brick, glazed terra cotta, or calcareous stones, such as limestone and marble.
- Do not sandblast.

Painting Exteriors

Historically, most exterior wood surfaces were painted to protect against weathering. Repaint regularly-typically every 3 to 7 years - to protect wood from water, UV damage, and insect attack. Exterior stucco was typically finished with a limewash or paint. Historic brick and stone were typically not painted.

- A COA is required before painting the exterior of any building in the locally designated historic districts.
- Paint colors and schemes are generally approved at the staff level, provided they are in keeping with the age and style of the building.
- Use compatible paints. Some latex paints will not bond to existing oil-based paints without a primer.
- The ARB will review all applications to paint unpainted brick or masonry on a case-by-case basis.

PAINTING MASONRY

Painting unpainted masonry on contributing buildings is generally not appropriate. This is especially true for character-defining decorative brickwork, including:

- Polychromatic brickwork
- Structural or decorative bond patterns
- Glazed, shaped, or Roman brick
- Details such as quoining, denticulation, corbeling, etc.

Painting masonry may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- An existing masonry addition that is an exceptionally poor match to the original in color, texture, or quality. Painting the addition is preferable to painting the original. Install a vertical trim piece to ease the transition between painted and unpainted masonry.
- A contributing building with many poorly executed masonry repairs that detract from the overall appearance. Masonry infill at old window and door openings typically does not rise to this standard. These provide a visual record of original fenestration and a road map for future restoration.
- A non-contributing masonry building that employs a simple running bond and no other decorative brick elements

WINDOW REPAIR AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Wood Window Sash Repair Process

Deteriorated wood window sash removed from framed opening in preparation for repair and restoration

Window sash in process of removing old glazing putty and glass panes

Wood window sash after paint removal

Window sash after application of paint primer followed by reinstallation of glass panes with new glazing points and putty

Window sash primed and painted after allowing putty to fully cure

Fully restored window sash reinstalled in framed opening

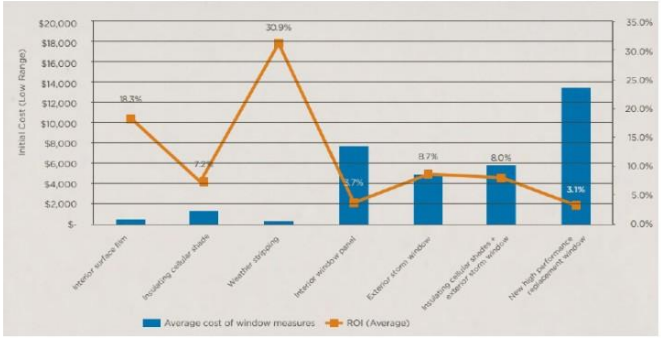
WINDOWS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Poorly maintained wood window assemblies are prone to air leakage, and single-pane glass allows more solar heat gain than its modern multi-pane counterparts. However, simple upgrades to existing windows - including caulk, weatherstripping, solar films, storm windows, awnings, and window coverings - can be "the most cost-effective option to increase the comfort of your home and save money on energy costs" (U.S. Department of Energy,"Update or Replace Windows," *Energy.gov*). According to a study completed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the average return on investment was highest for weatherstripping, interior surface films, and exterior storm windows (see graph below). Replacement with new high-performance windows had the lowest return on investment.

Before replacing historic windows, consider the following more cost effective solutions:

- Install weatherstripping at the sills and meeting rails
- Install a low-emissivity (low-e) interior film. Opt for a clear film that is not visible from the public right-of-way. Dark-tinted film is not recommended.
- Install interior cellular shades.

> "The common misconception that replacing windows will save as much as 50% in energy costs is simply not true. The windows in many historic buildings have functioned for more than 100 years and, with regular maintenance, will usually survive longer and work better than any replacement window. A replacement window does not generally pay for itself in a reasonable length of time."
>
> From "Weatherization of Historic Buildings" (National Park Service, 2022)



Average return on investment (ROI) for various window upgrades, from NTHP, Saving Windows, Saving Money, *(2012)*

SIDE YARD FENCES

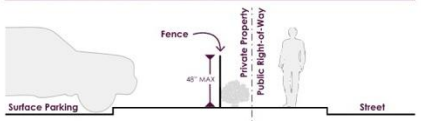
2016

- For surface parking areas associated with commercial uses, size a perimeter parking area fence to not exceed 48" in height.
- Install a cast-iron or other metal fence not exceeding 48" in height if located in the front yard.
- Install a fence that uses alternative materials that have a very similar look and feel to wood, proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components.
- Face the finished side of a fence toward the public right-of-way.
- Based on the chosen fence material, use proportions, heights, elements and levels of opacity similar to those of similar material and style seen in the historic district.

REAR AND NON-CORNER SIDE FENCES (LOCATED BEHIND THE FRONT BUILDING PLANE)

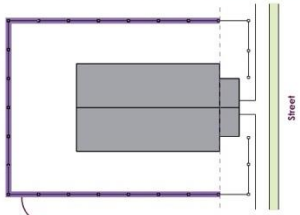
- Design a fence located behind the front building plane to not exceed 72" in height. If the subject property abuts a multi-family residential or commercial property, a fence up to 96" will be considered.
- An alternative fence material with proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components is acceptable. A simple wood-and-wire fence is acceptable provided it is appropriate to the style of the house.

Surface Parking Fencing Height Requirements



For surface parking areas associated with commercial uses, size a perimeter parking area fence to not exceed 48" in height.

Perimeter Fencing Height Requirements



Fencing highlighted in purple shall not exceed 72" in height (or 96" when adjacent to a multi-family or commercial building).

Design a fence to be compatible with the architectural style of the house and existing fences in the neighborhood.

Based on the chosen fence material, use proportions, heights, elements, and levels of opacity similar to those seen in the historic district.

2025

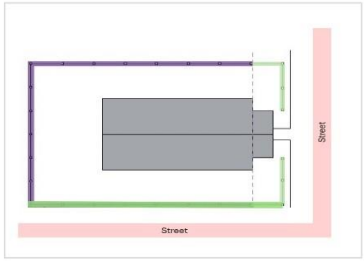
LANDSCAPE AND SITE FEATURES

This section provides site planning guidelines for all properties in locally designated historic districts including contributing, noncontributing, and new construction.

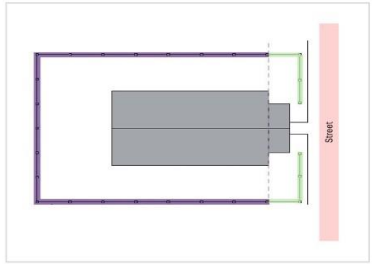
FENCES, WALLS, AND GATES

Fences and walls are character-defining features of many properties in Mobile's historic districts. A historic fence, wall, or gate should be preserved and maintained. New fences, walls, and gates should be compatible with the architectural style of the primary building as well as other fences, walls, and gates found in the district.

Historically significant fences made from wooden pickets or cast iron should be maintained. So should historically significant stuccoed brick or concrete masonry site walls.



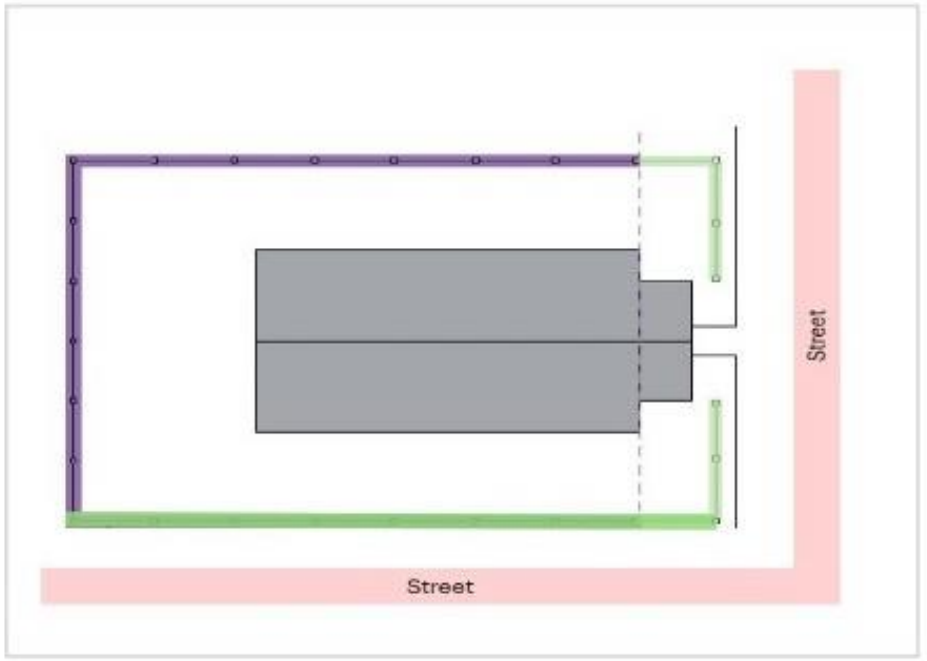
For corner lots where the side of the lot is visible from the street, the street-side fence must not exceed three feet in height.



Fences in front-facing lots can have 3 ft maximum height on their primary side (green) and 6 ft on secondary areas like sides and rear (purple).

SIDE YARD FENCES

2025



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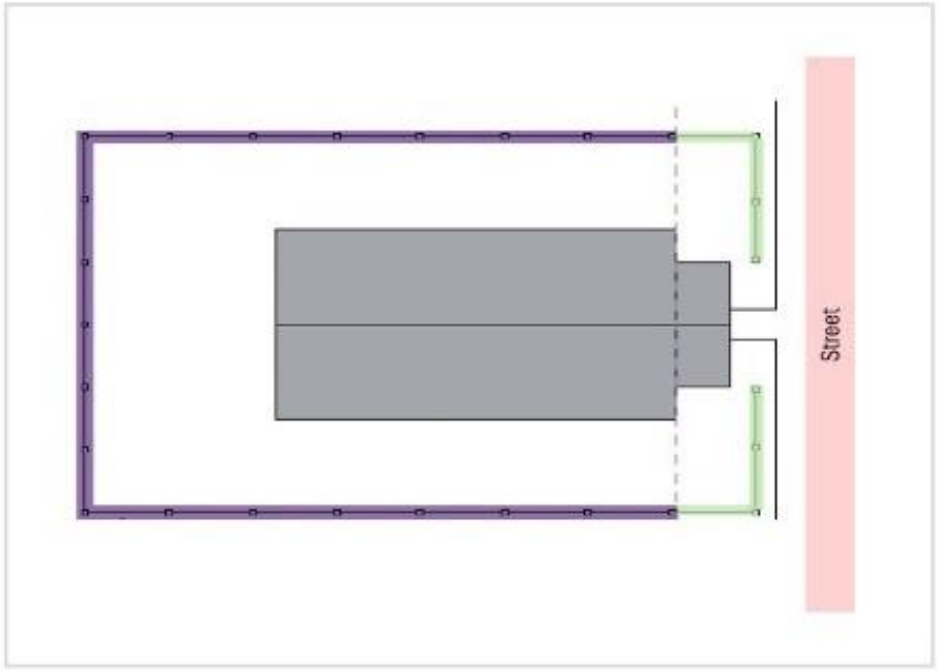


Fences in front-facing lots can have 3 ft maximum height on their primary side (green) and 6 ft on secondary areas like sides and rear (purple).

ALTERNATIVE WINDOW MATERIALS

Window Guidelines and Replacement Materials

2025

Window Replacement Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Wood sash. ▪ Steel (if original). ▪ Aluminum-clad wood. ▪ Fiberglass-clad wood. ▪ Extruded aluminum and fiberglass. ▪ True divided light or simulated divided light with spacer bar.
RESTRICTED	▪ Vinyl. ▪ Mill-finished aluminum. ▪ Interior snap-in or between-glass muntins

Historic Design Review Guidelines Update

What’s next

WHAT'S NEXT

1. **September 19:** Post draft publicly online with a comment tool
2. **September 19-October 3:** public review and comment period
3. **October 6:** Presentation to MHDC
4. **October - November:** MHDC review, discussion, and adoption

Questions

ROOF GUIDELINES AND MATERIALS

2016

5.13 Use new roof materials that convey a scale and texture similar to those used traditionally.

» Use materials that are consistent with the architectural style of the structure.
» Use materials with a similar texture, pattern and finish to the original.

SHINGLED ROOFS
» Use a composition shingle where a wood shingle would have been used originally.
» Muted grays and black are generally acceptable shingle colors.
» Do not use rolled roofing materials except on flat roofs.
» Do not use brightly colored roofing materials (such as blue or red).

METAL ROOFS
» If installing a new metal roof, apply and detail it in a manner that is compatible with the historic character of the roof, period and style.

- Use standing seam metal, metal shingles or five v-crimp.
- Use metal with a matte, non-reflective finish.
- Install the roof to have low profile seams.
- Finish roof edges in a similar fashion to those seen traditionally.

TILE ROOFS
» Use an original replacement material if possible.
» Use cement tiles when replacing clay tile roofs on larger buildings if clay is not available.
» If repairing specialty roof materials such as glazed clay tile or barrel tile, use a matching replacement material.

ACCEPTABLE ROOF REPLACEMENT MATERIALS
Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in texture, pattern, finish and color range to the original are acceptable. These often include:

» Slate
» Tile
» Metal when consistent with the period and style of the building.
» Dimensional shingles (asphalt, fiberglass, cement fiber, wood)
» Built-up or membrane roof on gently sloping roofs (less than 3:12) where hidden from view
» Lead
» Copper
» Other materials original to the building

UNACCEPTABLE ROOF REPLACEMENT MATERIALS
Materials that do not appear similar to the original in texture, pattern, finish and color range to the original are unacceptable. These often include:

» Corrugated fiberglass
» Asphalt roll roofing (unless obscured by parapet walls)
» Built-up membrane roof on steep sloping roofs (greater than 3:12)
» Panel and batten
» Brightly colored metal

Textured, composition shingles are an appropriate replacement for a traditionally wood shingled roof.

This historic house has slate tile roofing which is common in Mobile historic districts.

Metal roofing material may sometimes be inconsistent with the historic style of the house, and the traditional materials in the neighborhood.

2025

GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO ALL BUILDING TYPES

ROOFS AND GUTTERS

A building's roof is one of its most dominant features. Roof's form, pitch, material, and detailing are frequently integral to identifying a building's architectural style and period of construction. Mobile's locally designated historic districts are rich with a variety of roof forms and materials, including slate, clay tile, and standing-seam metal. The preservation of these features contributes to district character.

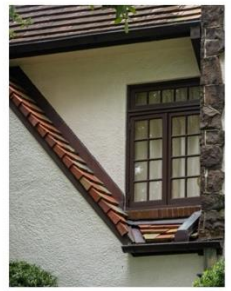
If alterations, repairs, or replacements must take place, observe the following best practices:

Maintain Form

- Maintain the original pitch of the roof, as well as the original eave depth and overhangs.
- Do not enclose exposed rafter tails if they are original to the building.
- Gutters and downspouts original to the building should be retained and repaired.
- New dormers, skylights, vents, or attic ventilators should be located out of view from the street, if possible.
- Solar panels, mechanical equipment, and communication equipment should be set back from the primary facade and not visible from the public right-of-way. Take care not to damage or remove historic materials or features to the greatest extent possible.

Clay tile roof in Old Dauphin Way

5-V Crimp metal roof in Oakleigh Garden



Slate shingle roof with matching replacement tiles

Repairs and Replacements

- Repair rather than replace. If replacement is necessary, replace in kind using original materials.
- If original materials are unavailable or cost-prohibitive, use an approvable alternative replacement material that matches the original in dimension, profile, texture, finish, and color.
- Asphalt shingles are an appropriate replacement material for asphalt and asbestos shingle roofs.
- Wood or slate shingles can be replaced with composite shingles that match the original in dimension, profile, texture, color, and finish.
- Metal roofs are allowed when appropriate to the building's period and style. Metal shingle and standing seam metal roofs with low profile seams are preferred. 5V-crimp metal roof panels are acceptable.
- Replace terra cotta roof tiles in kind if feasible. Otherwise, acceptable alternative materials include concrete, fiber cement, glass-fiber reinforced polymers (GFRP), and metal, as long as replacement tiles match the original in dimension, profile, texture, color, and finish.
- Finish roof edges in a similar manner to those seen traditionally.

APPROVABLE	• Clay or terra cotta tile • Composite shingles, including asphalt, fiberglass, and fiber cement • Standing-seam metal, 5V-crimp metal panels, and metal shingles • Slate shingles • Wood shingles • Other materials original to the building • Built-up or membrane roofing (on a slope equal to or less than 3:12)
RESTRICTED	• Corrugated fiberglass • Ribbed or corrugated metal • Asphalt roll roofing unless obscured by parapet walls • Built-up or membrane roofing (on a slope greater than 3:12) • Panel and batten

ROOF GUIDELINES AND MATERIALS

2025

APPROVABLE	▪ Clay or terra cotta tile ▪ Composite shingles, including asphalt, fiberglass, and fiber cement ▪ Standing-seam metal, 5V-crimp metal panels, and metal shingles ▪ Slate shingles ▪ Wood shingles ▪ Other materials original to the building ▪ Built-up or membrane roofing (on a slope equal to or less than 3:12)
RESTRICTED	▪ Corrugated fiberglass ▪ Ribbed or corrugated metal ▪ Asphalt roll roofing unless obscured by parapet walls ▪ Built-up or membrane roofing (on a slope greater than 3:12) ▪ Panel and batten