



# Village of Ballston Spa

## Exterior Claddings

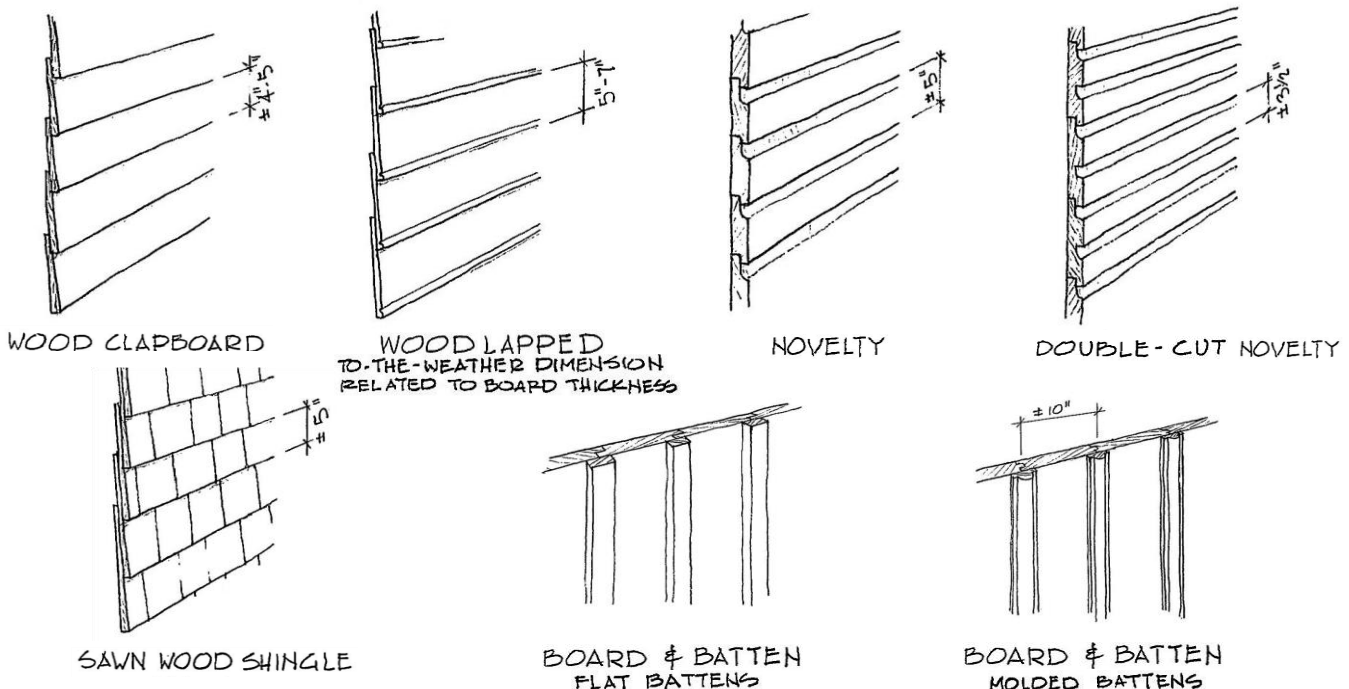
### Historic District Design Guidelines

“Exterior cladding” refers to the finish covering of exterior building walls, applied vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Exterior cladding encloses the building from weather and contributes to the architectural character by providing texture, scale, proportion, color, and horizontal and vertical visual elements.

Typical exterior cladding in Ballston Spa includes wood shingles and siding, masonry, stone and brick. Typically, wood siding was horizontal and applied in an overlap fashion, showing a portion exposed. Board and batten, a vertical siding with narrow strips (battens) that cover seams between wide boards, was also used.

#### Existing WOOD CLADDING

- Every effort should be made to preserve original, historic exterior cladding. Selective replacement of deteriorated pieces is often all that is needed.
- Remove synthetic siding materials and restore original exterior cladding whenever possible.
- If exterior cladding is so deteriorated or damaged that it cannot be preserved, new cladding should be replaced in-kind and match the original or historic cladding in design, texture, exposure and other visual qualities.
- The installation of vinyl or metal siding materials over historic cladding, or the replacement of historic materials with vinyl or metal, is not an appropriate preservation treatment and is strongly discouraged.
- When there are no alternatives to preserving the original cladding and a synthetic material must be used, the following considerations shall apply:
  - The use of synthetic materials should only be installed without irreversibly damaging or obscuring the architectural features and trim.
  - Fake wood grains are inappropriate and strongly discouraged. Exaggerated wood grains would have been undesirable on real wood siding.
  - The width and exposure of the new siding should match the original as closely as possible.



## MASONRY

- Maintain and repair original masonry. Repairs should match the original brick or stone in color and size as well as appearance, texture and strength of the mortar joints.
- Replacement bricks should be installed in the same brick pattern as the original.
- Concrete block is an inappropriate substitute for masonry.
- Exposed masonry surfaces should remain exposed. Surfaces should not be covered with new materials.
- Avoid painting previously unpainted masonry. This will cover defining features such as joint profiles and bonding patterns and may also create maintenance issues.
- Brick surfaces that have been historically stuccoed or painted should remain finished as these uncovered bricks are typically softer and may deteriorate if exposed.
- When cleaning masonry, use a gentle detergent with a natural bristle brush and low-pressure water rinse. Do not use metal brushes.
- If repointing of historic masonry is necessary, the mortar should match the original in profile, color and composition. The old mortar needs to be cut out carefully to avoid damaging brick and be removed to a sufficient depth to insure proper bonding.
- Mortar serves as a cushion between masonry units to allow expansion and contraction, which is why replacement mortar should be made of the same composition as the original. **Portland cement should not be used for masonry repairs as it is inflexible and may cause irreversible damage and significant long-term problems with spalling and cracking of masonry.**

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## CONSIDERATIONS

- Conduct periodic inspections of exterior cladding to preserve the original or historic siding. When materials are deteriorated, determine and correct the cause of the deterioration before repairing the materials. Remove deteriorated paint using the gentlest means possible.
- A historic paint color palette is encouraged.
- Repaint or re-stain previously painted or stained exterior cladding when needed.
- Keeping cracks where water can penetrate caulked and diverting water away from siding where possible will give long term results.
- Repair or selectively replace historic wood cladding instead of covering with synthetic materials. Often deterioration is limited, and historic materials can be repaired or only partially replaced.
- vinyl siding considerations:
  - o **Maintenance:** Vinyl siding presents its own maintenance issues. Wind, projectiles, and poor installation may cause vinyl siding to warp, split, crack or buckle. Improper installation or damage to vinyl siding can cause moisture to be concealed beneath it. This hidden moisture may accelerate rot, promote mold and mildew, and invite insect infestations.
  - o **Energy Efficiency:** Vinyl is not a good insulator and the thickness of any insulating backing would be minimal in order to not obscure the architectural features. Thus, the installation of vinyl siding would add very little to the overall energy efficiency of the building and will not have a competitive payback on an energy-saving basis alone (*Preservation Brief 8: Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings*, National Park Service).
  - o **Color:** While the color is permanent, time and weather will alter the finish of the siding. If a panel is damaged, it will be difficult to find a new replacement panel that will be an exact match in color and gloss. Vinyl siding may be painted, but will require regular, ongoing maintenance similar to wood in order to maintain the surface.
  - o **Fire:** Vinyl is made from a PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic resin that can pose serious health risks when burned.

- o **Installation:** The use of visible “J Channel” is discouraged; use trim and corner boards with rabbeted spaces to hide vinyl siding joints. Use the longest lengths possible to minimize the number of vertical joints. The surface must be smooth, fake wood grain is not appropriate.
- Engineered siding considerations:
  - o **Cost:** Can be more expensive than other options
  - o **Maintenance:** Very durable often with a 30+ year warranty. Insect and rot as well as impact resistant. Stands up to freeze-thaw cycles.
  - o **Color:** Comes either pre-painted or just primed. Can be repainted.
  - o **Installation:** Use products with smooth texture unless specifically replacing wood grain effect like rough cedar.
  - o **Fire:** Fiber cement siding is non-combustible. It won't burn away like wood nor melt like vinyl.

## Recommended Resources

- National Park service Preservation Briefs. <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>  
Brief #1 : “Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings”
- National Park service Preservation Briefs. <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>  
Brief #2 : “Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings”
- National Park service Preservation Briefs. <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>  
Brief #8 : “Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings: The Appropriateness of Substitute Materials for Resurfacing Historic Wood Frame Buildings”

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