

## EXTERIOR BUILDING MATERIALS



Exterior materials on buildings in the Old Orland Historic District include traditional materials such as brick, stone, and wood. Some building in the historic district also have other types of non-traditional exterior surfaces such as vinyl or stucco. Exterior surfaces often characterize the age in which buildings were built. Certain materials were used during certain times to clad buildings. Many times, it is this cladding that is the most important aspect of historic buildings that is worth preserving, especially the brick, stone and wood materials.

In some cases, original wood siding has been replaced with compatible new wood siding that has faithfully duplicated the appearance of the original wood siding. Older wood siding is found most commonly as beveled siding, but it appears in other forms such as flush shiplap, shingle, and board-and-batten.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Wood Siding

1. Existing historic wood siding should be retained and repaired as required. Whether in the form of beveled siding, shingles, board-and-batten, or plain flush siding, these traditional types of wood siding give the historic district buildings a texture and level of detail that is an important part of the district's character. Most such siding is painted to weatherproof the siding, and painted surfaces should be kept well-painted to avoid moisture infiltration and other elemental deterioration.
2. If paint consistently blisters or peels off wood siding, look for sources of moisture such as leaking gutters or downspouts; leaking supply or drain pipes on the interior; wall insulation with a faulty or non-existent vapor barrier; or ground moisture rising into the siding. Any such conditions should be corrected and the siding allowed to dry before painting again.
3. Water on roofs should be controlled with gutters and downspout systems in order to avoid having the water cascade onto the siding, causing erosive damage to the siding and pooling at the foundation. Water controlled in gutters and downspouts helps to maintain the integrity of the siding's paint and durability as well as provide positive water drainage from the structure and its foundation.
4. On contributing structures and on structures where wood siding already exists, repairs to damaged existing siding should be done with new wood that matches the appearance of the existing. Historic wood siding should never be covered over, nor should it be removed and replaced with another material such as vinyl or aluminum siding. Doing so is inappropriate because it significantly alters one of the most important character defining features of a historic frame building, its exterior surface and façade.
5. Wood siding should be used on new buildings, additions to existing buildings, or new garages and outbuildings that are considering siding as an exterior material in the Old

Orland Historic District. The siding should be used in one of the traditional forms: shingles, board-and-batten, shiplap, or beveled siding.

## MASONRY

1. Historic brick and stone should not be cleaned unless it is evident that the soil or grime on the masonry surface is actually causing damage or moisture retention. A darkened, weathered appearance is a natural consequence of aging.
2. If cleaning masonry must occur, use the gentlest effective means. Hand-scrubbing with a natural bristle brush and plain water may be effective. There are also gentle detergents that can do the job if plain water does not. For more stubborn dirt or grime, chemical cleaners can be helpful, but they or any other chemical method should be tested in an inconspicuous location or on a test brick to gauge the effect the chemical has on the brick before cleaning proceeds. Regardless of cleaning method, AVOID any pressurized application or high wash pressure system to avoid abrasive damage to the masonry. Do not wash with high-pressure water hoses or sand-blast brick surfaces. More damage to the brick will result and it will further the decay problem by exposing newly damaged masonry to even more moisture. The building will also have a crumbling mortar-less brick wall. Whatever cleaning method is chosen, have it tested and the work done by a competent contractor with experience in testing and cleaning for historic buildings.
3. Avoid sealers such as silicone, or any treatment intended to “waterproof” the masonry. The absorption and evaporation of moisture during varying weather conditions is natural for a masonry wall, and waterproofing treatments can interfere with this process and cause moisture to get trapped inside a wall. The Brick Institute of America notes that “while many remedial controls are available, the most efficient and low-cost method of damp-proofing or waterproofing walls is proper construction.” That includes proper wall maintenance or reconstruction.
4. Masonry which has been painted should remain painted, since removal of paint can be difficult and damaging. However, walls that have not been painted should remain unpainted.
5. Pointing of masonry should be done in a way that duplicates the color, texture, joint tooling, and physical composition of the building’s historic pointing. High-cement mortar can create a rigid framework that can cause cracking and spalling of the soft brick and limestone that may exist in the Historic District. The best thing to do is to consult an expert mason in historic preservation that can assess your historic wall and determine the proper treatment, method of application, and type of mortar needed for your wall.
6. Tooling or finishing of mortar joints should match the original tooling as closely as possible. Be especially careful that historically recessed mortar joints remain recessed, and that flush joints are truly flush, without excess mortar smeared on the surfaces of the bricks or stone. Some buildings in the Old Orland Historic District have historic joint profiles with the masonry mortar that project from the joints. These joints are known as “beaded joints”. This style should be preserved when doing maintenance work to such mortar, as should all historic joint profiles. To find a mason who knows how to repair or

create special or historic joint profiles, building owners should contact the local masonry union.

7. Historically, stuccoed surfaces should remain stuccoed. Removal of stucco usually is not recommended, since it is difficult to do so without damaging the underlying masonry and thereby compromising the building's structure to moisture. In addition, masonry walls, especially brick, often were chipped and gouged to enable the stucco to adhere, and removal of stucco reveals this damage and opens it to further moisture problems. Application of stucco is not appropriate for a wall which has not been previously stuccoed, since this significantly alters the character of the wall and of the building.
8. For further tips to deal with and diagnose moisture problems on masonry walls and buildings and to obtain an understanding of what moisture can do to masonry walls and how you can prevent moisture build-up, visit the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's [Basic Building Maintenance Presentation](http://www.illinoishistory.gov) on the web at <http://www.illinoishistory.gov>.

## CONTEMPORARY MATERIALS

1. Contemporary materials should be used only in traditional ways in the Historic District. Wood, for example, should be employed in traditional forms of wood siding such as beveled siding, board-and-batten, and wood shingles. Avoid incompatible contemporary types of wood siding such as rough-sawn, diagonal, plywood panel siding, or other clearly non-historic or modern types. Also avoid where possible contemporary materials that simulate but are not the same as traditional materials, these include various products intended to look like wood siding, shingles, or other traditional materials.
2. Similarly, use traditional forms of masonry, even though most masonry walls today are veneer on block or frame walls and are not traditional bearing walls. Of the various contemporary masonry materials, brick tends to have the most appropriate appearance for building walls, especially along 143<sup>rd</sup> Street, Union Avenue, and Beacon Avenue; stone tends to be most appropriate for foundation, and sometimes for chimneys though some buildings in and around Old Orland are entirely of stone (9960 W 143<sup>rd</sup> Street); Foundations should not be coated with any stucco materials or treatments, nor should stucco or a similar material be used to simulate stone foundation walls. This is because moisture can get trapped inside the stucco onto the foundation, which can cause damage to the foundation's integrity.
3. Consider preparing samples of new exterior materials prior to selecting them for a building. This will provide an opportunity to verify that they achieve the desired effect and that they are compatible with the area's historic materials. As always, consult the Village of Orland Park Development Services Department for information on how to best go about preserving your historic building and choosing materials.