

Roofs, Gutters, and Soffits

Staff Letter - No Certificate Necessary:

1. Alterations and repair to flat roofs in which no change is visible from the ground, including the following:
 - a) Installation of mechanical equipment, or vents.
 - b) Re-roofing and repair, provided the shape of the roof is not altered.
2. Replacement of roof mounted, hung or attached gutters and downspouts, provided any new material matches the previous in type, shape, color, and dimensions.
3. Built-in gutter relining.
4. Flashing repair and maintenance, only if not visible from a public way.
5. Skylights not visible from the public way.
6. Replacing a roof with "like for like" materials—same material, same color, same dimension.
7. In cases where historic roofing—e.g. wood or slate shingles—is found beneath the current top layer of roofing, providing proof is provided to the Preservation Commission staff, re-roofing with the roofing type found under the top layer will be allowed provided the material, shape, and color of the replacement shingles is the same as the historic roofing.

Staff Level Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. Re-roofing any visible roof surface.
2. Replacement of non-historic roof material with identical material and product of a different color.
3. New half round gutters and round downspouts when they do not alter the structure.
4. Built-in gutter reconstruction or replacement provided there is no change in profile, dimension, or material.
5. Reconstruction, restoration, or replacement of soffits, fascia, roof brackets, exposed rafters, and rafter ends provided they match the original.
6. Provided the material of the shingle does not change, staff may approve shingles of a more historically appropriate style or color.

Commission Level Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. Alterations to -- addition or removal of -- the following:
 - a. Roof size, shape, or pitch.
 - b. Accessories that are visible, such as skylights, chimneys, or mechanical equipment.
 - c. Architectural or decorative features such as roof cresting, decorative flashing, dormers, roof brackets, soffits, fascia, exposed rafters, and rafter ends.
 - d. Built-in gutters.
2. Any new gutters and/or downspouts not deemed architecturally appropriate.
3. Any gutters or down spouts are that are not metal.
4. Removal or replacement of historic roof material.
5. Any action deemed inappropriate by Staff.

Roofs, Gutters, and Soffits (cont.)

Recommended:

1. Original slate or tile roofs should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, new or imitation slate or tile is preferred. Consider retention of good material for installation on roof slopes visible to the street. If replacement with slate or tile is not economically possible, use asphalt or fiberglass shingles in a pattern or color similar to original roof material.
2. Preferred colors for asphalt or fiberglass roofs are medium to dark shades of gray and brown. Solid red and green roofs are generally only appropriate on some early 20th century buildings.
3. A flat roof that is not visible from the ground may be repaired or re-roofed with any appropriate material, provided it remains obscured from view.
4. Adding a slope to a problem flat roof if it is not visible from the ground or does not affect the character of the building.
5. A drip edge, if used, that is painted to match the surrounding wood.
6. Gutters and downspout should match the building body and/or trim color.
7. Repairs and retention of built-in gutters or reconstruction of the gutters in a similar configuration using alternative materials.
8. Where exposed rafter ends were original, roof mounted or half-round hung gutters are preferred.
9. Channel water from the downspout away from the foundation.
10. Original chimneys, which contribute to the roof character, should be repaired and retained. If no longer in use, they should be capped rather than removed.

Not Recommended:

1. Alterations to the roof slope and shape unless past inappropriate alterations are being reversed.
2. White, light, or multi-colored shingles and rolled roofing.
3. The addition of dormers on roof areas that are significant to the character of the building.
4. Covering exposed rafter ends with a gutter board and altering decorative rafter ends to accept a new gutter board.
5. Visible skylights.
6. Placing mechanical equipment such as roof vents, new metal chimneys, solar panels, TV antenna, satellite dishes, air conditioning units, etc. where they are visible from the street or where they affect the character of the building.
7. Rubber membranes, except where not visible from a public way.
8. Using metal roofing unless there is clear historical precedent for it.
9. Using metal roofing of a profile other than that of the traditional flat or standing seam design.
10. Using metal roofing of a surface color other than that which would reasonably look like natural or patinated copper or galvanized metal—or metal that resembles tar-covered metal.
11. Replacing half round gutters with gutters of another profile; replacing round downspouts with downspouts of another profile.