



CITY OF PONTIAC
Department of Building Safety & Planning

Mayor Deirdre Waterman

CITY OF PONTIAC
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
ROOF REPLACEMENT GUIDELINES

The Pontiac Historic District Commission hears many requests to replace character-defining historic original roofs. Per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the City of Pontiac's Historic District Commission Historic Review Requirements, roof replacements that destroy original roofing materials are not permitted because of the impacts upon historic features of the structure. The original material that is affected the most are the City's historic slate roofs; however other original roofing materials (wooden shakes, ceramic tiles, etc) may also be protected.

WINDOW REPLACEMENT REVIEW CRITERIA

In applying the City's review standards, proposed roof replacements do not meet the following City Historic Review Criteria:

- 74-55 (b)(1) "historical or architectural value and significance of the structure...to the surrounding area" will be impacted by the new roof that replace original roofing materials with non-historic materials (often asphalt shingles) that do not match appearance, and this change of roofing materials throughout the district will impact the district's overall appearance;
- 74-55 (b)(2) "relationship of the exterior architectural features" will be impacted by the new roof as the inappropriate materials will significantly affect the overall visual character of the structure;
- 74-55 (b)(3) "general compatibility of exterior design" will be negatively affected by the proposed work as it will impact the original exterior design of the home. Roofing materials are often a key overall design feature of the building and roofing material selection is often a key part of the architect's or designer's building design process;
- 74-55 (b)(5) "avoid, where possible, the removal or alteration of any historic building materials" – the proposed replacement of historic roofing materials will destroy these historic building materials;
- 74-55 (b)(7) "where reasonably possible, will repair rather than replace deteriorated architectural features and where replacement is necessary, whether such replacement is similar in composition and texture...and reasonably accurate duplication of the architectural feature" requires repair over replacement and replacement materials must match composition, texture and detail of original where replacement of roofing with new materials that are not similar does not meet this criteria; and
- 74-55 (b) (11) "alteration will be done in such a manner as to not impair the essential form and integrity of the structure" - proposed new roofing will impact the overall essential form of the structure by changing an important character defining feature, its roof.

For the Historic District Commission to approve roof replacements of historic roofs, the applicant must provide evidence that the roof cannot be repaired. Applicant must provide samples of replacement materials, if appropriate. This requirement will allow the Commission to ensure compliance with review criteria #5 and #7.

ROOF REPLACEMENT TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR HISTORIC ROOFS

The Historic District Commission will authorize the approval of roof repair/replacement under the following conditions, in order of desirability:

- 1) Repair of Existing Roof
- 2) Replace with Like (original is damaged beyond repair)
 - a. Use of the same materials
 - b. Matching existing configuration – an example, slate that is laid in a specific pattern
- 3) When damaged beyond repair, replacement with synthetic shingles or other materials that closely mimic the appearance of original materials in color, thickness, surface finish, sheen, etc.

NON-HISTORIC ROOF TREATMENTS

For structures that no longer have their original historic roofing materials, the Historic District Commission authorizes the replacement of “like with like” materials. For example, a non-historic asphalt roof may be replaced with a new asphalt roof.

If the original roof has already been replaced during a previous renovation, the Historic District Commission’s staff planner is authorized to administratively approve the application and provide a Certificate of Appropriateness for roof replacement.

The applicant is encouraged at a minimum to identify what roofing material was originally used on the house and to select a replacement material that mimics the original appearance of the roof, including the use of synthetic slate shingles.