



Roof Guidelines for Historic Homes

Most houses built before 1920 in Wisconsin were roofed with wood shingles. While some had slate, clay tile or very early forms of rolled asphalt, the vast majority were roofed with white cedar shingles. Wood shingles were almost always laid in straight rows and the shingles were fairly uniform in width and thickness. Wood shakes however vary in width and depth and can be laid unevenly. Very few historic houses had wood shake roofs. Photo documentation will be needed to support a proposal of wood shakes.

Asphalt shingles are recognized as an acceptable substitute to wood shingles however the proposed shingle should not create a new aesthetic. Standard 3 tab shingles or architectural shingles with a slight shadow line are acceptable. Architectural shingles with un-even bottom edges or heavy, fake shadow lines are not acceptable. Dark grey, black, dark brown and reddish brown (earth tones) are often the most sympathetic color choices. Red, green or blue shingles are not appropriate unless precedent exists that proves they were the historic color. These colors were typically used between 1920-1940. If your roof originally had slate, metal or clay tile – please contact our office to discuss appropriate replacement roofing materials.

Venting is also an important aspect of any roofing project on a historic house. Ridge vents are acceptable as long as the ridge vent continues all the way to the roof's edge. Slant-back and mushroom vents are also acceptable but must be located at the rear elevation away from the public right-of-way.



Wood Shingle



Wood Shake



3 Tab



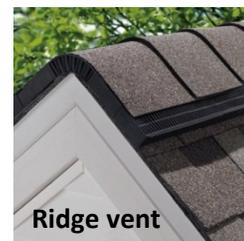
Slight Shadow



Un-even
Bottom Edge



Heavy Shadow
Lines



Ridge vent



Slant-back vent



Mushroom
Vent