

## GUIDELINES FOR ROOFS



**Recommended:** *Retain and maintain character-defining historic rooflines such as this mansard roof, roof materials such as these multi-colored patterned slates, and original historic roof features such as the bracketed overhanging eaves and elliptically arched dormers.*

A sound roof and functioning gutters and downspouts are critical to preventing moisture from entering the building. The roof shape is usually a major defining visual characteristic. Except for roofs not visible from the public view, roof materials have considerable visual impact on historic buildings, structures, and districts. Historic roof features are frequently character-defining features that add to the architectural significance of historic buildings, structures, and districts.

Because roof materials have limited life spans, few historic buildings and structures in Closter retain their original roof materials. Closter is fortunate to have a number of Second Empire buildings which retain handsome patterned slate roofs, as well as a number of early buildings which have *in-kind*\* replacement wood shingle roofs. Most of the historic buildings have replacement modern roofing materials, typically asphalt shingles.

Refer to the *Guidelines for Masonry and Stucco* chapter for how to treat chimneys and the *Guidelines for Porches and Exterior Trim* chapter for how to treat decorative roof features.

For Landmarks and buildings and structures in Landmark Districts, a Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A) is not required for the maintenance and repair of existing roof materials involving no change in the design, scale, material, or appearance of the structure. Nor is it required for the repair of existing roof structures such as dormers, chimneys, and roof drainage systems when using the same materials and when exterior architectural appearance is not altered. A C/A is

required for any work to the roof, roof features, and the roof drainage system that will change the exterior appearance of the Landmark or a building or structure within a Landmark District or involves work that does not replicate the existing materials and workmanship. It is also required for any removal or change to historic roof features such as cornices, overhangs, parapets, chimneys, dormers, cupolas, turrets, vents, weathervanes, cresting, and finials. It is required even when the change does not require other building permits.

For Non-Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts, changes to roof materials and changes to rooflines, roof features, and roof drainage systems that are not visible from public view will be reviewed as Minor Applications, except when considered not to be appropriate; then they require a public hearing by the Closter Historic Preservation Commission (CHPC). When visible from the public view, roof changes on a Non-Contributing Building in a Landmark District that alter the appearance of the structure and may impact the Landmark District require a C/A review with a public hearing. Such changes include, but are not limited to, altering the roofline by raising the roof, modifying the roof's shape, and/or adding or removing roof features.

### GUIDELINES

*Identify, retain, and maintain historic materials and features of rooflines and roofs.*

*Repair rather than replace historic materials and features of rooflines and roofs.*

*Replace character-defining historic materials and features of rooflines and roofs only when a material or feature is too deteriorated to repair. The replacement should match the historic materials and features.*

*Make alterations and/or new additions that are compatible with the historic buildings and district.*

## For Landmarks and Key Contributing and Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts

### RECOMMENDED

- Maintain and repair original rooflines, built-in gutters, decorative downspouts, cornices, overhangs, parapets, chimneys, dormers, cupolas, turrets, vents, weathervanes, cresting, finials, and other historic roof features.
- Maintain and repair architecturally distinctive roof materials such as slates whenever possible. Try to carefully remove and reuse loose slates. When materials are too deteriorated to reuse, replace in-kind. If reusing original material and in-kind replacement is not technically or economically feasible, use compatible substitute materials that match original in size, dimensions, exposure (overlap), pattern, color, and texture.
- Whenever possible, maintain and repair concealed or built-in gutters. If new gutters and downspouts are necessary, they should be installed so that no historic fabric is damaged.
- If the existing roof material is a modern replacement, it may be repaired or replaced with a material that matches the existing or with a replacement that enhances the historic appearance of the building. When choosing a roof material, investigate the historic appearance of the roof and the availability of the historic roof materials or replacement alternatives which simulate the size, dimensions, exposure (overlap), pattern, color, and texture of the historic materials while providing long-term durability. It is important to balance the installation costs with the durability and appearance of the materials. When considering replacement roofing, the property owner should consult the *Resources for Roofs* for excellent information on the advantages and disadvantages of various roof materials, as well as information on how to inspect roofs and roof drainage systems, and on recommended repair and replacement actions.

- When a historic roof feature is missing, such as a dormer, chimney, or cresting, consider constructing a new replacement feature based on historical, pictorial, and physical documentation. Another option is a new design that is compatible with the size, scale, materials, and design of the historic building.



**Recommended:** Retain and maintain historic rooflines, character-defining roof materials, and historic roof features as exemplified by this picturesque polygonal-shaped tower roof with colored shaped slates and terminating finial.

### NOT RECOMMENDED

- Altering the roofline visible from the [public view](#)\* through removing historic roof features, raising the roof, otherwise changing the roof shape, or adding new dormers, roof decks, chimneys, skylights, solar panels, television antennas or dishes, mechanical equipment, or cellular communication panels or towers. An exception is when the changes will match lost historic features and are based on physical, pictorial, or documentary evidence or are of compatible new design.
- Covering, enclosing, or removing historic eaves, cornices, and other historic roof features.



## For Non-Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts

### RECOMMENDED

- Use roof materials that do not intrude on the architectural character of the district.
- Make changes to roofs, including raising roofs and altering rooflines, which are compatible with the streetscape and conform to the recommendations in the *Guidelines for New Additions and New Construction* chapter.



**Recommended:** Use a roof material that is compatible with the historic architecture. The wood shingles on this early stone house reflect the traditional roofing material of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.



**Not Recommended:** Altering the roofline visible from the public view so that it is incompatible with the streetscape.



**Not Recommended:** Covering historic eaves and cornices.

### RESOURCES FOR ROOFS

Fisher, Charles E. III, and Deborah Slatons, eds. *The Roofing Handbook for Historic Buildings*. Washington, DC: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, 1999

Hopewell, New Jersey, Historic Preservation Commission, *Design Guidelines: Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance, Roofing*, <http://208.55.240.96/Guidelines-Historic-Properties.htm/>

National Park Service, *From Asbestos to Zinc: Roofing for Historic Buildings*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/roofingexhibit/introduction.htm>

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 3: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief30.htm>

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 4: Roofing for Historic Buildings*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief04.htm>