POLICIES OF THE READING BOARD OF HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

WINDOWS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Windows are important character defining features of most buildings in Reading's Historic Districts, and inappropriate replacements and alterations can compromise the integrity of the building, street, and historic district. Windows are among the most vulnerable features of historic buildings. Age, weathering, and lack of maintenance all contribute to their deterioration. Unmaintained windows can be drafty and difficult to operate, prompting premature replacement or alteration on the mistaken assumption that they are beyond repair. Simple yet effective maintenance, repair, and retrofitting measures will save both money and the building's historic character. Partially deteriorated wood, peeling paint, broken sash ropes, loose sash, or sash painted shut are not sufficient cause for replacing windows. These repairs will generally cost less than installing new windows appropriate for historic buildings. Also keep in mind that old-growth wood used in historic windows is generally superior to currently available wood products. New windows often do not last as long as historic windows that have been maintained.

1.2 The thermal performance of historic windows can be increased to be nearly equal to new windows with insulated glass by proper weather stripping and the installation of interior or exterior storm windows.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction of windows within the Historic Districts shall be classified as follows:

a. Repair Class I – Routine Maintenance: The in-kind regular maintenance required to upgrade a window to "like new" condition, including interior and exterior repainting, minor repairs of sash and frame, reglazing, and weatherstripping.
b. Repair Class II – Stabilization: The repair of partially deteriorated components using putties, consolidators, and/or sealants.
c. Repair Class III – Splices and Parts Replacements: Where stabilization is not possible, the partial replacement of deteriorated frame or sash with new matching pieces, permitting the retention of some of the original fabric.

d. Storm Windows and Thermal Panels: Exterior storm windows or interior thermal panels are added to weatherize, protect, and enhance the thermal performance of existing windows in good repair.
e. Window Replacement: Only where severely deteriorated original or existing windows require removal, new replacement windows are to match the existing size, material, operation, configuration, and details.
f. New Construction: Window assemblies in new structures or additions to existing structures are subject to review by the HARB for appropriateness within the respective Historic District.

3. REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Protect and maintain wood and metal windows identified as important in defining the historic character of a building in accordance with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Standards).

3.2 Original or historic windows including the existing openings, frames, surrounds, brick moldings, lintels, sills, sash, and glass shall be retained unless demonstrated to be beyond repair. Determination of "beyond repair" shall be made by the Historic Preservation Specialist or Consultant and will be based on the following criteria:
   a. Percentage of the window that is rotted or corroded
   b. The nature of the window problems
   c. The practicality of repair
   d. The cost of repair vs. replacement in-kind

3.3 On front / primary or secondary facades that are visible from a public right-of-way, windows demonstrated to be beyond repair shall be duplicated in the same size, operation type (double-hung, casement, awning, etc.), configuration, details, and where possible materials. The HARB may consider compatible substitute materials including, but not limited to, metal-clad wood and composite wood, provided that the new windows match the following characteristics of the historic windows:

   a. Exposed height and width of each sash
   b. Height and width of each glass lite
   c. Width of each sash stile and rail
   d. Width and profile of muntins
   e. Width and profile of exterior casing

   Evidence that the new windows will match the above characteristics of the historic windows must be submitted with all proposals for replacement windows as outlined in Section 4.4. Vinyl or vinyl-clad windows are not permitted on these facades and are not eligible for consideration of financial hardship, unless the existing windows are constructed of vinyl.

3.4 At the rear or on alley streets not visible from a public right-of-way, windows demonstrated to be beyond repair may be replaced with vinyl, metal, vinyl-clad or

metal-clad windows provided that the new windows match the historic windows in dimension, configuration, and operation type.

3.5 With respect to matching of materials, the following shall be understood: a wood historic window shall be replaced in wood, but not necessarily of the same species. A metal historic window shall be replaced with metal, but not necessarily of the same metal.

3.6 Structures with a Composite Index Rating of 96 and higher are not eligible for the consideration of compatible substitute materials as outlined in Section 3.3., except in the case of financial hardship.

3.7 On front/primary or secondary facades that are visible from a public right-of-way, existing windows with true divided lights must be replaced with new windows having true divided lights (TDL) or simulated divided lights (SDL). Snap-in grills and grills between the glass are not acceptable.

3.8 Only clear, non-tinted glass shall be used in replacement windows (except to replace original stained glass). Mirrored and tinted glass is not historically appropriate, nor any other glazing materials or applied films with color or reflective properties different from clear glass. Broken glass panes are to be replaced to match existing.

3.9 New replacement windows must not reduce the glass area of the sashes significantly. For wood windows less than 15" wide, the diminution shall be limited to 10%; for wood windows over 15", the diminution shall be limited to 6%. For metal windows of any size, the diminution shall be limited to 10%.

3.10 Replacement of special, decorative windows is strongly discouraged, but when necessary the replacements must replicate the shape of the original window, the muntin patterns, and other unique features. Replacement of original stained glass windows and transoms shall be done in a manner that matches the original historic colors, pattern, and details.

3.11 On front/primary or secondary facades that are visible from a public right-of-way, replacement of original or existing mullions, casing, sills, brackets, brickmold, lintels, pediments, crowns, surrounds, and other window components and accessories shall be completed with the same size, material, operation, configuration, and details. Vinyl replacement components are not permitted on these facades. Solid wood and polymer composites are permitted where provided with a field-applied painted finish.

3.12 The application of brake-formed aluminum panning over existing wood casing and sills is not permitted on front/primary or secondary facades that are visible from a public right-of-way. Aluminum panning is permitted at the rear or on alley streets not visible from a public right-of-way only where 50% of existing window openings on these facades have had aluminum panning installed by a previous property owner.

3.13 Original window security bars or grilles should always be maintained rather than replaced; however, if replacement is necessary the new grilles should match the originals, and be installed without damaging the window frame or masonry. The

installation of modern security bars or grilles on the outside of windows that would not have originally had such features is not permitted, and the use of alternative security measures, including interior bars, should be explored.

3.14 Temporary protection for window openings should be painted in a glossy black color and may have a false meeting rail to imply an actual window opening. Temporary coverings shall not prolong necessary repairs to existing windows longer than a period of six (6) months.

4. SUBMITTALS:

4.1 In accordance with submission requirements outlined in Section 4-108 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Reading, the following requirements for Repairs Class I and II shall be submitted for review and approval by the Preservation Officer:

a. Photographs of all facades on the existing building and detail photographs of pertinent window conditions (8 ½" x 11").
b. Manufacturer's samples of proposed color selections and material samples if requested.

4.2 In addition to submission requirements for Repairs Class I and II, the following requirements for Repairs Class III shall be submitted for review and approval if requested by the Preservation Officer:

a. Scale dimensioned detail drawings or material samples.
b. Field review of proposed repairs by the Preservation Officer with the Owner and a qualified contractor.

4.3 In addition to submission requirements for Repairs Class I, II, and III, the following requirements for storm windows shall be submitted for review and approval by the Preservation Officer:

a. Manufacturer's product data sheets with product descriptions, photos, and performance data.

4.4 In addition to submission requirements for storm windows, the following requirements for window replacement and new construction shall be submitted for review and approval by the HARB:

a. Scale drawings including dimensioned elevations with proposed color selections indicated, and head, jamb, sill, mullion, and muntin details.

(Adopted May 15, 2018)