Roof, Dormers, Chimneys, Balustrades, Cupolas, Cornices and Friezes, Drainage Systems

Roof

Today most of the roof material in the District consists of asphalt shingle, in shades of black, gray, brown and green. A few original slate roofs remain. Several structures have new wood shingled roofs.

Recommendations

- The maintenance, repair and retention of slate is encouraged. If the slate must be replaced concrete slate or asphalt shingle is recommended, in a color that closely matches the color of the historic material.
- All distinctive roof features, such as patterned shingles, iron cresting, and chimneys shall be retained.
- The retention of original rooflines is recommended.
- A Certificate of Appropriateness is required if the color or material of the roof is to be changed.

Decorative or "patterned" slate

Chimneys

Most buildings in the District have one or more chimneys. Early structures have simple, unarticulated chimneys. As the nineteenth century progressed and architectural styles changed chimneys became more articulated. A few buildings have painted chimneys, usually painted white with a band of black encircling the top. Chimneys should be checked annually for spalling brick and loose mortar, and repointed as necessary.

Typical chimney construction in the district showing simple constriction and painted stack.

Recommendations

- Repointing mortar mix should be match the original in strength, color, texture, and hardness (density and porosity). In general, mortar should be slightly weaker than the masonry unit. Laboratory analysis of samples of original mortar is recommended to insure that a compatible formula is used in repointing and repair. The use of premixed mortar is not recommended because it creates a harder joint than the original and makes the bricks more susceptible to deterioration.

- Flashing repairs should match the original in color, dimensions, shape, and material as closely as possible.

Dormers

Wall dormer

Few buildings in the District originally had dormers, and most are later additions designed to make upper floors more useful and habitable by providing light and ventilation.

There are two types of dormers in the District: roof dormers and wall or shed dormers. The most common dormer is the roof dormer, which is structurally separate from the building. These dormers typically fall below the roof ridge and are set back from the eaves. The McCulloch house at 160 Summer Street at the Landing has roof dormers. Wall dormers are less frequently seen. Wall dormers are a continuation of the wall above the eave, such as the front dormer added to the Enoch Hardy house at 14 Summer Street.

Existing dormers should be preserved and not altered in scale or form. If repair or replacement is necessary the materials should be in-kind, matching the details and finish of the original as closely as possible.

Arched top dormer

Gabled roof dormer

Balustrades

Roof top balustrade

Balustrades are one of the most noticeable character defining features of a structure, and several buildings in the District originally had roof and/or porch balustrades. Balustrades are susceptible to deterioration from weathering and only a few remain today. Every effort should be made to retain balustrades, and they should be repaired as needed. If replacement is necessary the materials should be in-kind, matching the details and finish of the original as closely as possible.

Cupolas

Character defining cupolas

Cupolas are small, decorative, windowed structures astride the ridge of a roof, and can be used to exhaust hot air from the house. Three houses on Summer Street have large cupolas centered on the roof, and several barns have smaller ones. Every effort should be made to retain historic cupolas, including maintenance of roofing materials, flashing, windows and decorative trim.

Cornices and Friezes

Cornices and friezes are the top two members of a classical entablature, connecting the siding of a building with the roof and providing a visual termination for the wall. The cornices of Colonial buildings are usually simple and unadorned. Greek Revival houses often have full entablatures, with wide cornices and friezes. The cornices of Italianate structures are distinctive, with the use of brackets placed on a wide frieze. Queen Anne style buildings had either simple cornices, or the cornice was incorporated into the decorative design elements on the building. On Colonial Revival structures the cornice is usually prominent, incorporating dentils on the frieze.

Recommendations

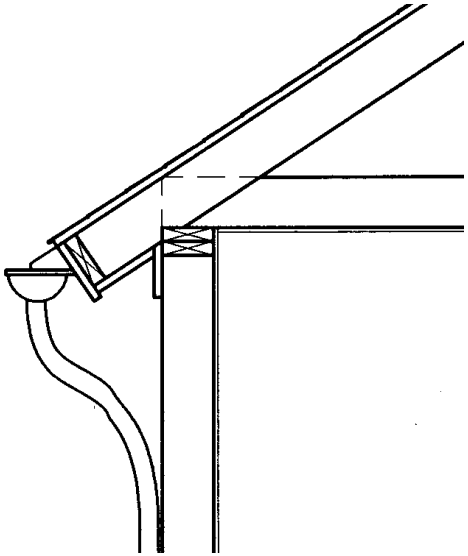
- Cornice and frieze elements should be maintained and repaired if necessary, using in-kind replacement materials and matching decorative details and profiles of the existing original design. Replacement moldings are available in a variety of profiles. The removal of cornice and frieze elements, such as dentils and brackets is not recommended.

- Cornices and friezes should be protected during any repair or cleaning.

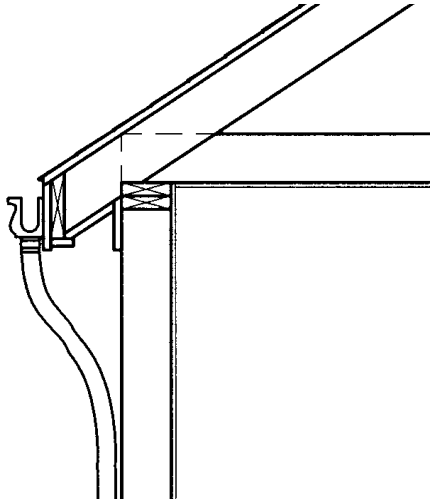
- Ornamentation, such as dentils and brackets, should not be added to the cornice and frieze, unless physical or photographic evidence shows that the building once had these features.

Cornice return on Greek Revival building

Dentil course



Half-round gutter



Ogee gutter

Drainage Systems

There are two types of roof drainage systems in the District, both designed to collect water along the roof edge and channel it away from the building. The most common system is an exterior drainage system, which includes gutters and downspouts, made of wood or metal, and flashing. Gutters are installed along the cornice level of pitched-roof buildings to conduct water to the downspouts. Metal gutters come in a variety of shapes within the District, including half-round or formed ogee, and typically are made of galvanized metal, copper, lead-coated copper or aluminum. Half-round gutters with round downspouts are a common style on many buildings. A few houses retain their original built-in drainage systems, in which lined gutters are built into the cornice, making the system less visible than external gutter systems. The elements of historic drainage systems contribute to the character of the building, and careful consideration should be given to choosing the same or similar materials when undertaking any repair to the drainage system.

Recommendations

- Drainage systems constructed of historic materials should be retained and repaired as necessary. Repairs should be made using in-kind materials, matching the profile and finish as closely as possible.

- Refasten loose downspout support brackets in mortar joints. Do not reattach brackets to brick or stone surfaces.

- Refasten loose gutter support straps under the roofing material. Do not secure to the roof surface.

- Replace any broken or missing brackets with compatible brackets.

- Replacing original internal, or boxed-in, gutter systems with suspended gutters is not recommended.

- If replacement of gutters or downspouts is required, the new gutter should match the original in color, dimensions, and shape. Seamless metal gutters can be made to match original profiles.

- The size and frequency of the downspouts is determined by the area and pitch of the roof. As a rule, for every 100 square feet of roof area, add one inch to the diameter of the downspout. For example, a three-inch diameter downspout can carry rainfall from 300 square feet of roof. Downspouts should be spaced a **maximum** of 40 feet apart to prevent water from backing up.