

Changes to the Building Exterior

2.5 ROOFS, GUTTERS, AND DOWNSPOUTS



Examples of dormers, chimney, cornice, and eaves

The roof form and pitch are among the major distinguishing characteristics of a historic building. Roofs can be flat, pitched, hipped, curved, or arranged in various combinations. In Covington, Second Empire style buildings are defined by mansard roof forms as shown on photograph below. The roofing material can also be a defining and distinguishing characteristic of a historic building. Historic roofing material includes, standing seam metal, slate, wood or metal shingles, and clay tiles. Asphalt and asbestos shingles became popular roofing materials in the twentieth century both for new construction and for reroofing earlier buildings.

Roofs have many elements that are character defining, including chimneys, dormers, cornices, and eaves.

Chimneys are typically supported by a masonry foundation or reinforced concrete. Chimney stacks are constructed of brick or masonry with the flue located inside of the stack. The crown, or cap, is placed on top of the chimney to prevent water damage from occurring within the stack. The flue penetrates the cap allowing the smoke to leave the structure. Chimneys must be constructed with flashing along the roof base to prevent water damage to the roof.

Dormers project from the roof of a building and contain a window as shown in the photograph below. The vertical sides of the dormer should match the exterior walls or the roof of the building, usually being either sided, brick, or slate. Dormers are usually topped with a gable roof and may have eaves or cornices that match the rest of the building. Dormers accent the upper floor by creating more floor space and allowing the entry of natural light and ventilation.

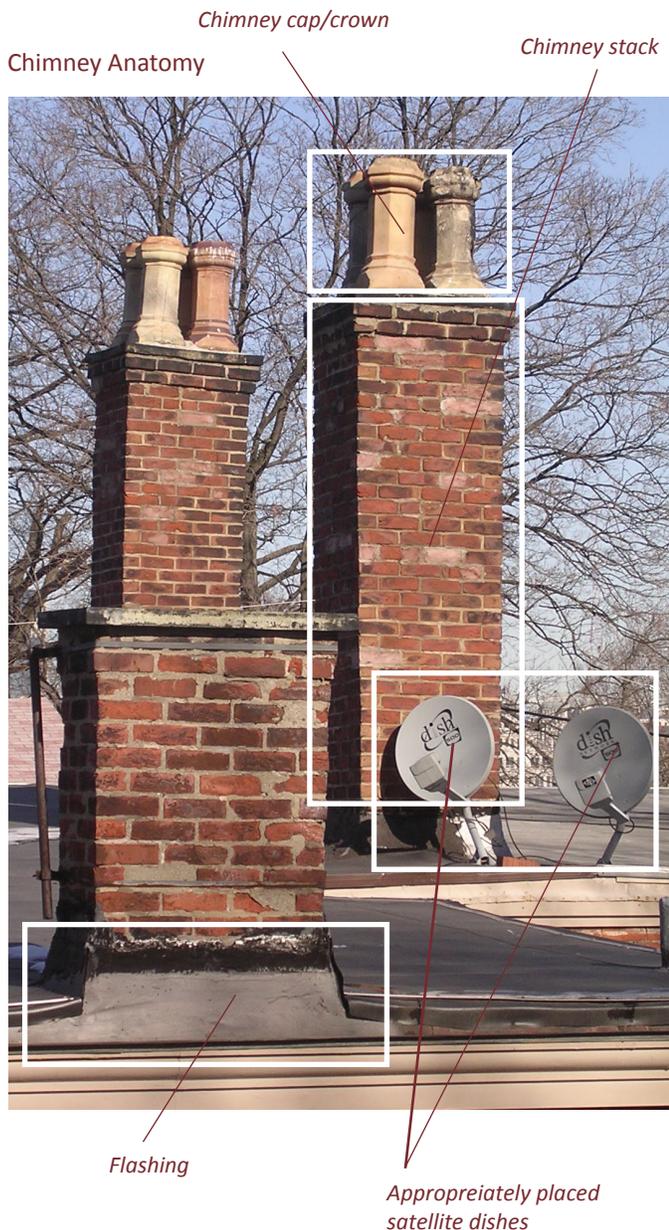
Cornices and eaves are located at the top of exterior walls and are historically built in a decorative fashion. Eaves are normally an extension of the roof beyond the face of the building. Cornices are ornamental and built with wood, stone, cast iron or sheet metal. Cornices and eaves usually contain box gutters to shed water from the roof, thus protecting the walls and foundation from excess precipitation. Both features also shade the upper windows of the building. Not only are the cornices and eaves functional, they are also an essential part of the historic integrity and design of the structure.

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GUIDELINES:

1. Maintain and preserve the original roof shape of the building.
2. Do not add dormer windows, skylights, or other architectural features to a roof if they detract from the overall character of the building. Skylights should not be visible from the street.
3. Roof decks are permitted on rear elevations when not highly visible from the street or when it does not detract from the overall architectural character of the building.
4. Maintain and preserve the original roofing material.
5. New roofing shall be appropriate to the style and period of the building and neighborhood. New roofing should match the original roofing on surrounding structures. If the building has already had original roofing removed, alternate roofing materials may be installed.
6. TV antennas or satellite dishes shall be placed on a roof so that they are not seen from a public right-of-way. They shall be placed on rear elevations or non-visible side elevations and are not to be on the front of a building or roof. (See Section 2.13)
7. Maintain and preserve architectural elements that are a part of the roof, such as dormer windows, chimneys, or cupolas.
8. Preserve chimneys that are highly visible from the street, are character defining, and are on the front slope of a building.
9. Maintain cornices and eaves. They are not to be removed, covered, or wrapped.
10. Use alternative materials, such as fiberglass and molded products, only if deterioration of original materials deems it necessary.



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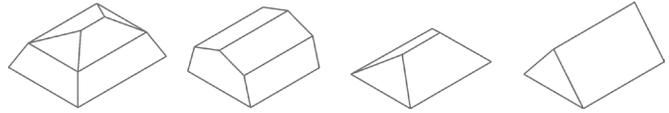


Example of an appropriately painted box gutter and downspout system

11. Preserve, repair, and maintain existing box gutters. If original box gutters must be replaced, a similarly designed box gutter shall be installed on front elevations and other elevations highly visible from a public way. Modern hanging gutters may be installed on elevations that are not highly visible from a public way when the original box gutters are not able to be repaired.
12. On main buildings new gutters should be half-round or ogee. New downspouts should be round.
13. Rain barrels should be placed at corners and are not to be placed on the front facade of a building.



Mansard Roof with original slate shingle roof and dormers



Examples of roof shapes: Mansard, Gambrel, Hip, Gable

- Rain barrels are to be a neutral or muted color compatible with historic colors.
14. Paint exposed gutters and downspouts the same color as the trim, unless they are copper. To prevent the paint from flaking and peeling, new metal gutters or downspouts should be coated with a galvanized steel primer before applying the finish coats of paint.
 15. Repair, maintain, and clean cast-iron boots, scuppers, and other ornamental roof accessories.
 16. Properly insulate roofs to prevent ice dams at box gutters and overhangs.

Diagram of box gutter construction

