OTTAWA SIDING CONTRACTORS

Permits, Heritage & the Lot Line

When to ask the City of Ottawa about a permit, heritage properties, and cladding on walls close to the lot line

4 Expert Answers from Siding IQ

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Q1

My house is close to the lot line in Hintonburg, what siding is allowed?

Which siding the Building Code allows on a wall close to a lot line depends on how far that wall sits from the property line, measured as "limiting distance." You need to know that number before choosing a material, and it is measured by a designer or the City's building official, not estimated by eye.

The rule is in section 9.10.15.5. of the 2024 Ontario Building Code. At a limiting distance of 1.2 metres or more, the close-wall cladding rule does not apply and you can choose siding the way you would for any other wall. From 0.6 metres to under 1.2 metres, the wall needs a fire-resistance rating of at least 45 minutes, but that clause does not restrict which cladding material you use. Under 0.6 metres, the 45-minute rating is still required and the cladding must also be either metal or noncombustible, or vinyl that meets a narrow set of conditions: installed without furring over gypsum sheathing at least 12.7 mm thick or over masonry, with a flame-spread rating no greater than 25 and a thickness no greater than 2 mm, or a tested assembly. Under 0.6 metres, any cladding has to fit one of those options. Ask the City's building official before you choose a material for any wall in that range.

One more thing worth knowing: if the house is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or sits within a Heritage Conservation District, any alteration that affects heritage attributes needs City approval before work begins. Changing the siding material on a heritage property can affect those attributes. Talk to the City's heritage staff before settling on anything.

The City of Ottawa's permit pages do not list siding either way, so ask Building Code Services whether a permit is required for this job before you start, particularly given the lot-line situation.

A few things worth noting from the ground or indoors before a contractor visits: look at how close the wall face appears to be to the fence or property boundary, check whether there are any windows or doors in that wall, note any existing siding that is cracked, loose or pulling away from the wall, and look inside for stains on walls or ceilings near that side of the house. That information will help a contractor and the City's building official give you a more precise answer about what the wall's limiting distance actually is and which materials are on the table.

Q2

Re-siding with structural repairs in Ottawa, when is a permit triggered?

The City of Ottawa's permit pages do not list siding or re-siding either way, so we found nothing on the City's pages saying it is always exempt or always required. What does shift the answer toward "permit required" is structural work done at the same time.

The Building Code Act says "construct" includes a material alteration or repair to a building. The City's permit list includes structural repairs or alterations and enlarging or relocating a window or door. If your re-siding job involves repairing or replacing structural sheathing or framing, that is the kind of structural repair the City's permit list names; ask the City whether your scope counts. If you are also moving or enlarging a window opening, that is on the City's permit list on its own. Either of those conditions, alone or together with new siding, is where the permit question becomes real.

A few other situations where the City's guidance matters before you start:

- Adding exterior insulation under the new siding. The City's permit pages do not list exterior insulation either way, so ask before the job begins.
- A wall that sits close to the lot line. The 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.10.15.5.) limits which cladding can go on a wall depending on how far it sits from the property line, so ask the City's building official what applies to your wall.
- A heritage-designated property or a property in a Heritage Conservation District. Designated buildings are not covered by permit exemptions, and the Ontario Heritage Act requires City approval before work that affects heritage attributes. Ask the City's heritage staff before choosing a material or signing a contract.

Even where a permit is not required, the 2024 Ontario Building Code still applies to the work. That means the two planes of protection (cladding plus a drainage plane behind it), sheathing membrane lapped at least 100 mm with upper sheets over lower, flashing at horizontal junctions and over wall openings where the vertical distance from the bottom of the eave to the top of the trim is more than one-quarter of the eave's horizontal overhang, and the ground clearance of not less than 200 mm for moisture-sensitive cladding such as untreated wood, OSB, hardboard and plywood.
A fair quote for a job with structural repairs should spell out what happens if more damage is found once the old siding comes off, because that is where scope and cost can change. Ask the contractor to put the process for handling hidden damage in writing before you sign.

Ask the City of Ottawa's Building Code Client Service Centre whether your combination of siding and structural work needs a permit.

Q3

New siding on a designated Glebe house, which City team approves?

For a designated heritage property in the Glebe, two separate City of Ottawa teams are involved, and you need to speak with both before any siding work begins.

The first is the City's heritage staff. Under the Ontario Heritage Act, alterations to a designated heritage property require City approval before work that will affect heritage attributes. Changing the cladding on a designated house may affect those attributes. A staff-level heritage permit for alterations costs $309.00, though restoration, rehabilitation or preservation projects that meet the Standards and Guidelines, and building maintenance projects, are fee-exempt. Talk to the City's heritage staff first to find out what materials and profiles are acceptable and whether your project qualifies for the fee exemption.

The second is Building Code Services. The City of Ottawa's permit pages do not list siding or re-siding either way, so we found no answer on the City's pages on whether a building permit is required for your scope. Because the property is designated, the permit exemptions that might otherwise apply to minor work do not apply here. Ask the City's Building Code Client Service Centre what is needed before any work starts. This matters especially if the job involves replacing structural sheathing, adding exterior insulation, or enlarging a window or door, which is on the City's permit list.

Once both approvals are sorted, the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) sets the technical standard for the installation itself. The Code requires a first and second plane of protection behind the cladding (Div. B, 9.27.2.2.(4)), sheathing membrane conforming to CAN/CGSB-51.32-M with joints lapped not less than 100 mm (9.27.3.2., 9.27.3.3.), and flashing at every horizontal junction between cladding elements (9.27.3.7., 9.27.3.8.).

A few things to confirm before you hire anyone:

- Ask the City's heritage staff which heritage attributes the siding affects and what the approval process looks like for your specific address.
- Ask Building Code Services whether a building permit is required given the designated status and the scope of work.
- Ask the contractor whether their quote includes the cost of any required removal and disposal, new membrane, flashing, and trim, and what happens to the price if damage is found behind the old siding.
- Ask whether the crew's Working at Heights training under O. Reg. 297/13 is current, and request a WSIB clearance if this is a rental or investment property.

One question to put to a siding contractor before you sign anything for a designated Glebe house: "Have you worked on a designated heritage house before, and will your quote follow whatever the City's heritage staff approve for this one?"

Q4

Making a window bigger during a re-side in Orleans, permit?

Enlarging a window is on the City of Ottawa's list of work that requires a building permit, and that applies in Orleans the same as anywhere else in the city. The re-siding itself is a separate question: the City's permit pages do not list siding either way, so you need to ask Building Code Services before you start either part of this job.

The two pieces of work interact in a practical way. The siding then has to be fitted around the new opening, which means new flashing over the window head, sealant between the siding and the window frame, and the sheathing membrane lapped and detailed correctly at the opening. Under the 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.27.3.8.), flashing over a wall opening is required where the vertical distance from the bottom of the eave to the top of the trim is more than one-quarter of the horizontal overhang of the eave. Sealant between the siding and the window or door frame is required under 9.27.4., unless the joint is completely protected from rain.

A few other things are worth checking before you commit to a contractor:

- Ask whether the quote covers the permit application, or whether that is your responsibility.
- Ask what happens to the price if the framing around the existing window turns out to need repair once the old siding comes off. Under the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, if your agreement includes an estimate, the supplier cannot charge more than 10 per cent over it, so get the scope in writing before work starts.
- Ask whether the contractor's crew holds current Working at Heights training, which is an employer obligation under O. Reg. 297/13.
- You can ask for a WSIB clearance certificate; for a rental or investment property you are not covered by the householder exemption, so that matters more.

One question to ask before signing: "Is the permit application included in your quote, and what will you charge if the framing around the old window needs repair?"
If you want to hear from local Orleans-area siding contractors who can look at both parts of this job, the request form on this page sends your details to contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Siding Contractors. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa or your own municipality) before starting any siding project, and have old siding on a house built before 1990 tested before it is disturbed. Siding work in Ontario must meet the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24). Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawasidingcontractors.ca** for the latest answers.