

Keeping It Real:

Why Customised Replica Timber Cladding Makes Sense in Heritage Restorations



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Introduction

Heritage restoration projects can deliver beautiful results in a finished product when undertaken with attention to detail and craftsmanship.

Builders and architects are among the industry specialists who understand that there are many competing requirements to satisfy when working on a heritage property if an authentic result is to be achieved. In part, this can be because of the stringent legal requirements for heritage restorations that the different Australian states have legislated

to protect their own unique history and character. But it can also be due to the difficulty in sourcing building materials which closely complement the various materials and designs used in previous historical periods.

Working with a reliable provider of quality replications for weatherboards and shingles can improve the ease of completing a heritage restoration project, as well as deliver an authentic-looking and solid building to be enjoyed for years to come.



A Highly Regulated Field

Perhaps the most obvious challenge that anyone involved in a heritage restoration project can encounter is the need to comply with the heritage legislation applicable to the particular Australian State in which the property is located. While each state has different specific requirements, they share in common a legal requirement on behalf of the owner of the property to ensure that any building work undertaken on a heritage listed property must preserve the historical significance of the building.¹ Similarly, all states mandate significant penalties for failure to comply with heritage legislation.² This can range from monetary fines, to having to demolish non-heritage-approved work.

In Queensland, for instance, entire areas rather than single properties can be heritage listed. This means that properties neighbouring those of historical

significance may be required to ensure that any new building projects complement the period character of the neighbouring property.³

This means that property owners, architects and builders must work in close consultation with the relevant government authority, and pay close attention to the types of building materials used in such projects. The most commonly available building materials today may, in fact, be unsuitable for use on a heritage property.

Apart from the heritage compliance objective, some buildings simply require a transformation or upgrade of features to compliment the building era. Restoring to their former glory rather than trying to make something old look new.

Good Quality Saves Time and Money

An inability to successfully match modern building materials to the type and style of the period materials in the property being restored can have enormous impact on a project.

In the first place, a failure to obtain a building permit for a heritage building can mean that the project is delayed while the legal situation is rectified. This can, in turn, affect the length of time that the project takes to complete, which will increase the cost.

Further cost increases can be caused by fines given for failure to comply with heritage legislation, and in demolition of building work undertaken without permission.

A less-obvious, but important, cost in a heritage restoration project can be the loss of value to a property where materials have been used in the construction that are less authentic to the period style of the original building. For instance, the appearance and therefore value of a weatherboard home can be improved when it is restored using genuine weatherboards that have been cut from timber, as the weatherboards in previous historical periods were.



The appearance and value of a weatherboard home can be improved when it is restored using genuine weatherboards



Healy's Customised Period Weatherboard and Shingles

Since it can make economic sense, as well as aesthetic sense, to use materials that have been crafted to be replicas of historical materials it can be reassuring to know that sourcing providers of items such as weatherboards and shingles is simple.

Since 1990, Healy's Building has been making their own weatherboards and shingles for timber exterior cladding, drawing on their own experiences in building restoration and in machining timber. The company has since built a reputation for replicating original period features for use in conservation work, and thus maintaining the building themes of any period façade.

While Healy's catalogue offers a wide variety of styles representing commonly used designs and types of weatherboards and shingles, they are able to reproduce any type of weatherboard or shingle. This allows for the unique original timber character of any building to be able to be preserved at peak value as an asset and as an item of historical significance.

The team at Healy's are able to draw on their own expertise in building to offer advice on how best to maintain the original appeal of a building, which streamlines the restoration process and contributes to a more pleasing result at the end of the project.

Furthermore, by custom-making most profiles of special run weatherboards and timber mouldings, using Healy's products can have a direct impact on the speed and ease with which restoration permits can be obtained.

Heritage restoration projects can be much more complicated than newer renovation projects. When contemplating a heritage restoration project, it can make sense in a variety of ways to use the expertise and authenticity of replicated materials from a reliable company to streamline heritage approval, and to deliver an end result to be proud of.





REFERENCES

¹ Altering Heritage Assets, NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs & Planning, 1996
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/hmaltering.pdf>

See also: Development Act 1993 (SA) and Heritage Places Act 1993 (SA) in Managing Building Compliance Obligations (Existing Buildings): A Guide for Government of South Australia Agencies, Government of South Australia, December 2013

² Heritage Act 1995 Victoria
http://www5.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/ha199586/

³ A Simple Guide To Brisbane's Heritage Places and Character Homes, Brisbane City Council, 2010,
http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/planning_and_building_guide_to_brisbane%27s_heritage_places_and_character_homes.pdf

