Reverend John Alexander Dowie designed the roof on Shiloh House, his 1902 parsonage, to symbolize the Holy Spirit emanating from Zion City, Illinois. Citizens in Zion wonder if the religious tribute offers heavenly protection to the building as well.

As 33 tornadoes whipped through northeastern Illinois in April 1996, Tom Pierson, of Precision Roofing, held his breath. The roof on Shiloh House was less than a year old. In the small town of Zion alone, $3 million in damage was reported, but the roof on Shiloh House was spared.

Was it the CertainTeed shingle? The installation? Or John Alexander Dowie’s tribute? “It depends on who you ask,” maintains Pierson. “My guess is that it was a little of each”.

In 1967 Shiloh House was partly reroofed but the 1995 reroofing removed the last of the original roof. Precision Roofing stripped off the entire roof: an asphalt-based shingle from the back of the house and the original roof from the front and east ends of the house. The front and east deck was roofed with 25 squares of CertainTeed Carriage House™ shingle in Sherwood Forest.

Carriage House was chosen because it has chamfered edges and deep shadow lines, which replicate the look of the original roof. Carriage House uses two full-size base shingles and, thus, also simulates the depth of slate or other hard roofing materials. Wide, chamfered corners look like hand-carved scalloped edges, and the 8-inch exposure further enhances the dimensional appearance of the roof.

Pierson also used Carriage House to recreate John Dowie’s design on the roof. The roofers cut Black Pearl, Georgian Brick, and Heirloom Silver Carriage House shingles into individual tabs and overlaid the design.

Whether the elevation, the roofing materials, or the religious significance of the roof contributed to the building’s withstanding the 1996 tornadoes, is a matter for speculation. Of significance to Tom Pierson it is that, years later, Shiloh House continues to display the traditions of his hometown.