



PAINTING GUIDELINES

General Principals

Every effort should be made to save and maintain unique, important architectural features of a building to help preserve its original character and history. Repairing and protecting original architectural features and materials is preferable to their replacement.

Removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided. This applies primarily to the exterior of houses, but can also apply to important interior features and spaces.

In some cases, replacement of significant historical materials may be allowed as determined on a case-by-case basis. Any replacement materials may be used *only* with the approval of the Home Preservation Program. These materials shall enhance the building's historic architecture and be compatible with any adjacent historic buildings and streetscapes.

All buildings and sites are to be recognized as products of their time. Any changes that have no historical references or which attempt to seek an earlier appearance are to be discouraged.

Changes which have taken place through the course of time but may represent another style or character are still evidence of historical development and may have historical significance in their own right. These changes are to be recognized and respected.

Limited replacement in kind of extensively damaged details and features is preferable to replacing the entire feature.

PAINTING

Exterior paint serves these main purposes:

- 1) *To improve the building's appearance*
- 2) *To prevent moisture from penetrating a building's exterior siding and decorative features as well as structural members. Excessive moisture is one of the biggest causes of deterioration to wood materials.*
- 3) *To protect the building materials from any weather-related deterioration*

RECOMMENDED:

- Identify sources of moisture problems and repair them 1st before repainting. Evidence of problems includes but is not limited to: blistering, flaking, cracking and peeling.
- Paint failure does not necessarily indicate that wood or other paintable material is in poor condition, structural failure and beyond repair. Repairing rather than replacing materials is often a better and more economical choice.
- Stabilize deteriorated or damaged wood first before continuing with renovation project.
- Inspect painted surfaces to determine whether re-painting or just a cleaning is required. Begin with gentlest means possible to clean surfaces
- Research and try to use the original color scheme on a building, if possible. Make note of any special finishes.
- If painting a different color scheme, try to save some patches of historic paint as a record of the building's physical history.



- Prepare wood surfaces carefully before painting. Remove old paint only if necessary for proper adhesion of new paint
- Determine if latex or oil base paint was last applied. Most historic buildings have been painted with oil, rather than latex paint.
- Follow guidelines for lead paint. Historic buildings often involve existing lead painted surfaces, which can be a health hazard if not handled properly. (*See links below*).
- Protect *all wood* surfaces with exterior primer; paint or stain with a product that is compatible with the selected paint/stain.
- Prime any new wood on all sides – including back & edges – prior to installation.
- Follow manufacturer’s instructions when repainting exterior surfaces. Follow especially recommendations regarding appropriate primer for the material to be covered.
- When determining a color scheme, consider when the building was built, its architectural style, and any significant architectural details that need to be highlighted or defined.
- Colors are a personal preference. A paint scheme can express an owner’s individuality but should be sympathetic to the age and style of buildings.
- General rule of thumb: “Paint your building either light to dark or dark to light.” For example, if your base (wall) color is light, paint trim and accents as darker color. If your base is dark, paint the trim a light color.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- Completely remove all old paint unless necessary for proper adhesion of new paint.
- Using destructive paint removal techniques – propane torches, sandblasting, and water cleaning over 300 pounds per square inch, rotary sanders, and rotary wire strippers. This can cause irreparable damage to wood materials and details.
- Using new colors that are not appropriate to the historic character of the home or the neighborhood are not recommended.
- Painting masonry surfaces or architectural features that have never been painted. For example, unpainted stone foundations, sills, lintels and other masonry details should remain unpainted.

DETERMINING WHAT TYPE OF PAINT IT IS:

- Oil/Alkyd Paint: Mix solution of 2 tablespoon of lye crystals dissolved in one cup of warm water. Apply to the painted surface using a brush or rag and let sit for 10 minutes. Oil/Alkyd paints bubble and blister. Latex paint is not affected.
- Latex Paint: Apply sponge soaked in solution of household ammonia to the surface and keep moist for at least 10 minutes. If paint begins to become pliable and dissolve, it is latex.
- Lacquer Test: apply 100% lacquer thinner solution to the area. If the coating dissolves, it is lacquer.
- Shellac Test: apply 100% denatured alcohol to the coated wood material. If the coating dissolves, it is shellac.

CONSIDERATIONS IN PAINT SELECTION:

- Same Paint: to use the same type of paint, complete all the necessary surface preparation, scraping and wire brushing with the appropriate hand tools. Wash as needed with TSP (tri-sodium phosphate) and rinse thoroughly with clean water. Prime all bare and new wood surfaces.
- Switching Paints: to change to a different finish paint (e.g., from oil to latex), all painted wood surfaces should be solid primed with the proper exterior, oil/alkyd wood primer according to all the



manufacturer's specifications. When changing the finish coat color(s), have the primer "half tinted" to the new finish coat color to ensure complete coverage with good hiding power and a longer life.

- **Finish Coat:** Remember to purchase high-quality exterior paint and follow all manufacturers' specifications. When finished, all paint should completely cover the existing surfaces. Two finish coats may be necessary to completely cover.

For more information on exterior paint problems click on this link:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/10-paint-problems.htm>

For more information on reducing lead paint hazards click on this link:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/37-lead-paint-hazards.htm>

For more information on guidelines regarding lead-based paint hazards click on this link:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/healthy_homes/lbp/hudguidelines

For more information on identifying important visual elements of historic buildings click on this link: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/preservedocs/preservation-briefs/17Preserve-Brief-VisualAspects.pdf>

For more information on exterior woodwork surface preparation click on this link:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes/Tech-Notes-Exterior01.pdf>

For more information on protecting exterior woodwork click on this link:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes/Tech-Notes-Exterior04.pdf>

For more information on paint removal from exterior siding click on this link:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes/Tech-Notes-Exterior02.pdf>

For more information on decals substitute for hand-stenciling click on this link:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes/Tech-Notes-Finishes01.pdf>

For more information on painting historic interiors click on this link:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/preservedocs/preservation-briefs/28Preserve-Brief-PaintingInteriors.pdf>

For more information on selecting Victorian paint colors click on this link:

<http://www.oldhousejournal.com/choosing-victorian-paint-colors/magazine/1684/>

For more information on paint colors for historic homes click on this link:

http://www.oldhousejournal.com/living_life_in_colors/magazine/1522

For more information on general maintenance on historic houses click on this link: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/47-maintaining-exteriors.htm#projections>

For information on exterior marine-grade varnish finishes click on this link:

<http://www.thewoodwhisperer.com/articles/difference-between-spar-varnish-and-regular-varnish/>

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Architectural Guidelines:

[https://www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Departments/Development/Planning_Division/Document_Library/Library_Documents/PDFs/hrc%20\(2010\).pdf](https://www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Departments/Development/Planning_Division/Document_Library/Library_Documents/PDFs/hrc%20(2010).pdf)