

## 2.3 Exterior Finishes:

### Exterior Surface Preparation, Paint, Stains, and Maintenance

Painting does not require a Building Permit, therefore selection of paint colors does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness review. Historical paint schemes can be referenced in many books, including those listed in the recommended reading list. Paint charts with historic colors are also available at paint stores.

### Colors & Paint

The placement of colors—rather than number of colors—best accentuates the architectural details. Colors are distributed into three categories: base, trim (major and minor) and accent. The base often matches the natural color of building materials, such as brick or stone. The major trim color is used to frame the façade, doors and windows. It also is the primary color of the cornice and major architectural elements. If a minor trim color is used, it often is a darker shade placed on doors and window sashes. An accent color is used in limited doses to highlight small details. Colors should tie the architectural elements together, and this scheme should be consistent throughout the façade's upper and lower portions.



- *Base Coat: Green on siding and foundation*
- *Major Trim: Light beige on window framing, corner boards, porch, roof eaves, frieze boards*
- *Minor Trim: Red on window frames and door*
- *Accent Colors: Two tones of tan on gable shingle and window hood shingles*

#### Boutique Color Scheme

This non-historical color scheme uses bright trim and accent colors in dramatic contrast to the base color of a building. A building must have an extremely ornate architecture to pick out details successfully with multiple-accent colors. Too many colors on the wrong elements will detract from the building's character and that of its neighbors. Taken to an extreme, boutique color schemes can create a building that looks as though a carnival were taking place inside.

#### Historical Color Scheme

This scheme uses body, trim and accent colors from a particular time period. Historical color schemes are more appropriate for the style and character of buildings designated as landmarks or situated in designated historic districts. The colors should complement the schemes on adjacent buildings. Colors may be chosen based on paint chip analysis of a building's original color or based on colors used on other buildings of the period. Color guides of documented historical hues from selected paint manufacturers are an aid to historical color selection. Old photos of the building or a similar one can establish light versus dark color placement.

## Surface Preparation for Painting

Surface preparation is 90% of the work that goes into a properly painted surface. Improper preparation is 90% of the reason why paint fails. Proper surface preparation of wood, metal and masonry prior to repainting will maximize the longevity of the top coat. Additionally, proper safety measures should be taken when removing paint. Many paints manufactured before 1970 contain lead.

Sandblasting, high pressure washes, or other abrasive paint removal methods should never be undertaken. Well-documented evidence shows that these methods do irreversible damage to wood and masonry surfaces. Sandblasting removes the hard, glazed surface from kiln fired masonry and exposes thinner, more porous material to water infiltration and accelerated deterioration. Sandblasting also severely pits the surfaces of masonry and wood, and opens the grain to moisture, dirt and mildew infiltration.

Following the proper surface cleaning, significant architectural elements should be retained, repaired or preserved whenever possible. As a last resort, damaged material should be replaced with similar, matching material only. Weathered and cracked wood should be treated with consolidates, preservatives and/or fillers, such as wood epoxy, then sanded prior to sealing.

### Recommended

- ✓ Consider using a professional contractor with training and experience in the paint removal technique.
- ✓ Thoroughly remove dirt, mildew and paint chalk with a mild detergent.
- ✓ Use a drop cloth to collect paint chips/debris to avoid ground contamination.
- ✓ Use protective equipment: ie, respirators, eyewear, gloves to minimize the potential hazards of lead based paints.
- ✓ Remove failing paint on wood with electric heat, scraping or sanding. Remove failing paint on metal or masonry surfaces with an approved chemical application or with scraping or sanding.
- ✓ Following the removal of loose paint, it is important to “featheredge” the remaining paint where it meets a lower surface (such as bare wood) by sanding into the edges. This will ensure the smoothest appearance for the final paint job
- ✓ When removing synthetic siding such as vinyl or aluminum, and you are planning to use the original wood siding, allow the wood to be exposed for 3-4 months before painting to allow the wood to dry-out from the moisture that was trapped due to the use of a synthetic siding.

### Not Recommended

- ❑ Removing paint by abrasive techniques such as sand or water blasting since this can damage the wood and introduce moisture into the building. The use of water pressure greater than 200 psi. is considered water blasting. The introduction of excessive moisture should be avoided because of excessive drying time of the wood. Wet or damp wood will not allow a coat of paint to properly adhere to the surface, and may additionally cause the wood to stain due to the formation of mildew.
- ❑ Careless use of a heat plate or heat gun which overheats the paint and unnecessarily damages the wood through charring or fire.
- ❑ The use of blow torches to remove paint because of the high fire hazard.



## Painting

The purpose of paint is to seal the building surface from the elements and to prevent deterioration of materials from temperature and humidity extremes. Generally, wall surfaces that have not been painted should remain unpainted, such as brick, terra cotta, cast concrete block and stone. Soft, porous brick that was originally painted should remain painted. Always select paint that is formulated for the particular surface application planned. A primer coat seals the surface and enhances the bond with the compatible top coats. On unsealed wood and metal surfaces, use oil or alkyd primers. Unsealed masonry requires a specialized primer/sealer. When repainting over an existing top coat, continue to use the same paint formulation- oil or latex. If a formula change is necessary, or if the original paint type cannot be determined, then prime with a first coat specifically made for the top coat planned. Finally, apply two top coats to provide the most durable finish.

## Clean-Up and Maintenance

### Recommended

- ✓ Recycle old/used paint locally. Refer to City website or newsletters for information on recycling sites and dates.
- ✓ Reuse paint thinners (mineral spirits and turpentine) for clean up. First allow the paint solids to settle at the bottom of container, then pour off the clear solvent.
- ✓ Clean surfaces annually using the gentlest techniques and household detergents.

### Not Recommended

- ❑ Pouring solvents into storm drain or sanitary sewer.