

Preservation Guidelines: Paint Colors

Paint Colors

Color is perhaps the most immediately noticeable part of any building. Many of Bennington's buildings are painted white, following either the original paint scheme or long-standing local tradition. Others, especially from the late 1800's, are more colorful. While it is usually appropriate to continue painting a building in its current traditional colors, a new color scheme in keeping with the building's date and style can add character and interest.

For additional background, see National Park Service Preservation Brief 10, "Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork" and other publications listed in the Information Sources section of this handbook.

Basic Guideline

When repainting a building, consider maintaining existing traditional paint colors or else using appropriate historical colors based on historical or physical evidence.



Fig. 5-72: 126 Jefferson St. The strong use of contrast in the paint colors of this building highlight the trim work.



Fig. 5-73: Corner of Jefferson & Elm St. This house uses only a single paint color for all façade elements which is typical of more modern structures.

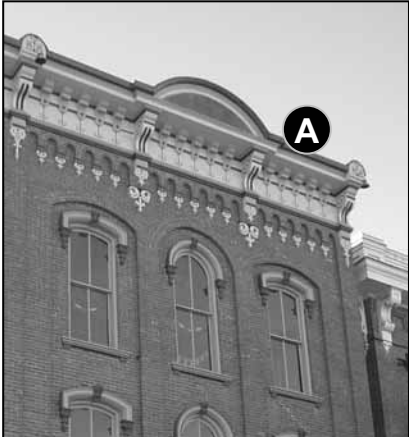


Fig. 5-74: 113 South St. The cornice of a multi-story building can be its most impressive design element, and is often where most color is used.



Fig. 5-75: 185 North St. Different paint colors are used consistently to distinguish clapboards, shingles and stonework on this building.



Fig. 5-76: 12 Pleasant St. Paint colors are used here to highlight the different facade materials in this Tudor style house.

Appropriate

- A** Maintaining existing paint colors if they have been used on the building for a long time.
- B** Carefully scraping small portions of paint in different parts of a building to determine which colors were used in the past. (See the Information Sources section for background on methods of paint scraping to discover historical colors.)
- C** Repainting in a color scheme appropriate for a building's date and style. (Again, see Information Sources for background on appropriate historical colors.)

Not Appropriate

- 1** Using new paint colors which are not in keeping with a building's date and style.
- 2** Stripping wood to expose its "natural" surface or adding new unpainted wood when a building has always been painted in the past.



Fig. 5-77: 332 Main St. Subtle uses of color add intricacy and added depth to the cornice of this building.



Fig. 5-78: 213 Park Street. The darker color of the door adds contrast to the overall paint scheme, and draws the eye toward the entry. Here, the storm door has been painted to match the front door beyond.