



Paint Color Guidelines for Historical Downtown Vincennes

The exterior surfaces of historic buildings are painted for primary reasons- to protect and preserve the exterior materials and to create color schemes appropriate for the building architectural style. The paint colors selected for a historic building will greatly contribute to the historic character of the building and surrounding historic district, and as such, should reflect the historical age, period and style of a building, accentuate the architectural features of the design and represent the current owner's taste.

This method of selecting colors and locations of colors does not mean that every building in a historic district or of a particular period or style should be the same colors. There is a wide range of attractive colors, which may be combined in hundreds of ways to provide for individuality with overall continuity. An appropriate, well-executed exterior color combination can dramatically alter the appearance of a building. Likewise, the application of garish colors on a building's exterior can overpower its architectural character and compromise its integrity. Although an exterior paint job is not an irreversible change to a building, it is a highly visible and relatively expensive one, so a careful study of the style of the building, the surrounding streetscape, and the region's climatic conditions makes sense. If a building's original color scheme is unknown or not pleasing to its owner, then considering other color combinations is appropriate. Property owners should take advantage of the many excellent resources now available that describe historic color palettes and appropriate combinations.

Note: Original stone or masonry surfaces should be maintained and not be painted, unless severe deterioration of the brick or stone can be shown to require painting and other consolidation or stabilization methods cannot be shown to be appropriate. If masonry was previously painted, it is often not appropriate or possible to remove paint and appropriate repainting should be considered. Also, Preservation or restoration of ornamental cornices is especially encouraged. Other decorative elements to be respected include belt cornices, pilasters, window arches, and frames. The painting of unpainted masonry surfaces is not considered appropriate because it conceals the inherent color and texture and initiates a continuing cycle of paint maintenance. However, the repainting of previously painted masonry is encouraged over attempts to remove the paint films chemically or abrasively.

Things to Consider As You Plan

Routine cleaning of painted surfaces is an important maintenance step. Often, low-pressure washing of a previously painted exterior with a garden hose will reveal that the paint film is intact under the surface dirt and mildew. However, higher-pressure power washing can damage intact paint layers and force water into the wall itself. The success and the longevity of any paint job depend primarily on the quality of the surface preparation and the paint. Proper preparation includes removing all loose or peeling paint down to the first sound paint layer. Stripping intact layers of paint is unnecessary and undesirable from both a historical and a practical standpoint. Often, only hand scraping and hand sanding are necessary for removing loose paint. Destructive paint-removal methods, such as sandblasting, water blasting, and using propane or butane torches, are not appropriate for historic buildings because they irreversibly damage historic woodwork, soft metals, and masonry, and they are potential fire hazards. However, if paint is severely deteriorated and gentler methods are not successful, thermal devices such as electric hot-air guns may be used with care on decorative wooden features, and electric heat plates may be used with care on flat wooden surfaces. Similarly, chemical paint strippers may be used to augment gentler methods, but the surface must then be neutralized to allow the new paint film to bond.

The cleaning of architectural metals varies, depending on how soft, or malleable, the metals are. Soft metals, such as lead, tin, tern plate, and copper, are best cleaned with chemical cleaners that will not abrade their soft surface texture. However, any chemical cleaner should be tested on an inconspicuous sample area in advance to determine if it will discolor or alter the metal itself. Abrasive cleaning techniques such as grit blasting are too harsh for soft metals and should never be used on them.

Cleaning hard metals, such as cast or wrought iron and steel, is best accomplished by hand scraping or wire brushing to remove any corrosion before repainting. In extreme cases a low-pressure (80-100 lbs. per square in.), dry-grit abrasive cleaning may be necessary if wire brushing has proven ineffective.

Patching or replacing deteriorated metal in kind is always preferable to using substitute materials. Corrosion due to galvanic reaction between dissimilar metals limits the options of patching one metal with another. If a detail of a painted metal feature such as a decorative cornice is missing or deteriorated, replacement in kind may not be feasible, and the replication of the detail in fiberglass, wood, or aluminum may be appropriate. However, asphalt products such as roofing tar corrode metals and should never be used to patch flashing or other metal surfaces. Because mildew can ruin a new paint job, it should be eradicated before repainting by using either a commercial preparation containing 5 percent calcium hypo-chlorite or a homemade solution consisting of 3 quarts of warm water, 1 quart of chlorine bleach, 2/3 cup of borax, and 1/2 cup of detergent. Either solution should be applied with care using a soft scrub brush, and thoroughly rinsed off.

Renovation of Historic, Landmark, and Contributing Buildings:

The purpose of these guidelines for the renovation of structures is to define and encourage respect for basic architectural similarities that contribute to the character of the area. Historically, building modifications were made as needs changed. Many of these alterations were sympathetic to the original character of the structure and may take on significance themselves. Others were unsympathetic changes that eroded the historic integrity of the façade.

In general, it is acknowledged that changes to structures will occur over time. The concern is that these changes not damage the historic building fabric and that of the overall design integrity of the buildings.

The objectives of the guidelines for the Historic, Landmark and Contributing Buildings are to:
Maintain the original character of the façade of historic buildings.

1. Analyze the building for its essential elements.
2. Respect the original design of the building.
3. Don't apply theme designs that alter the original character.

As a general policy, any design, which alters historic elements, is discouraged in the historic districts. However, there are cases where the benefit of new design elements to be introduced outweighs the loss of historic elements. The impact of such alterations varies depending on the historic importance of the building. Therefore, the guidelines for renovation should be applied more stringently to structures of major historic significance than to those with less significance. Retain and preserve architectural metals, such as copper, tin, brass, cast iron, wrought iron, lead, and tern plate, that contribute to the overall historic character of the district is greatly encouraged.



CONSIDER FABRIC AWNINGS TO PROVIDE DEPTH AND COLOR AND TO SHADE THE STOREFRONT GLASS

A canvas awning can be an important element in providing color. Since awning colors are more limited than paint colors, it is advisable to select the awning first. Align awnings with others in the block where appropriate. This particularly applies to the bottom line of the awning. Symbols or logos are encouraged on the main surface of the awning. Coordinate the color for the awning with the color scheme of the entire building front and with other buildings on the block.

Awnings: Guidelines

1. All awnings must be canvas or woven fabric.
2. Color must be compatible with the building colors.
3. Awning style must be appropriate to the building style.

PRESERVE THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF UPPER STORY WINDOWS

Consider reopening upper story windows if they are presently blocked.

If lowered ceilings are necessary, pull the dropper ceiling back from the window.

Maintain the original spacing patterns of the windows.

MAINTAIN AND REPAIR THE ORIGINAL DOOR, IF POSSIBLE

Traditionally, entrance doors were made of wood with a large panel. Standard aluminum and glass commercial doors have replaced many original doors. Although lacking in historic character, they are generally unobtrusive.

Aluminum doors and storefronts can be made more compatible by painting them a dark color.



DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE COLOR SCHEME FOR THE ENTIRE BUILDING FRONT THAT WILL CONVEY A UNIFIED IMAGE

As colors are chosen, it is important to consider the building as a whole, as well as which details to emphasize. The Vincennes Historical Review Board has pre-approved four color palettes for the main street program to help improve the streetscape. By doing this it allow the merchants to choose three colors for one of the four color schemes with no need to come before the review board. In conjunction with this two hundred and fifty Historical National Trust colors are also approved and recommended if you would like to create your own palette, but coming before the review for a is required for this.

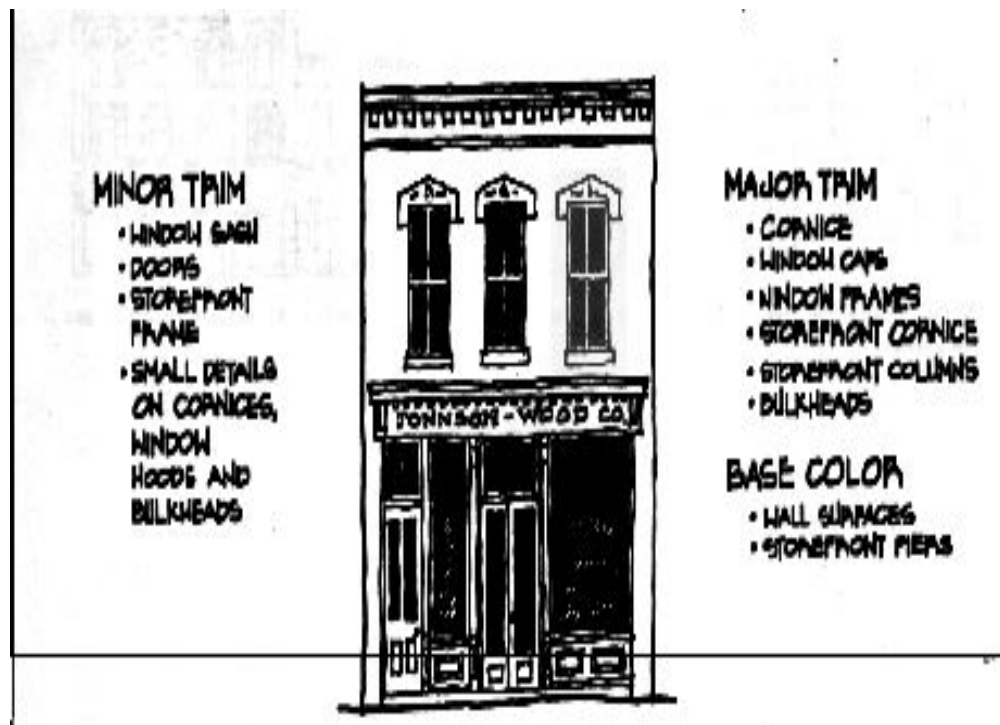
Generally, three colors are sufficient to highlight any façade.

The **BASE COLOR** is that on the upper wall and piers flanking the storefront. Often this color will be natural brick and not require paint. If the building has been painted already, a color should be selected that relates to the surrounding buildings, a color that is appropriate to the period and style of your historic building, the next decision is for a major and minor trim color to contrast and compliment that of the body color.

The **MAJOR TRIM** color defines the decorative elements of the building, tying together the upper façade trim and the storefront. The trim color should complement the base color. If there is a natural stone or terra-cotta trim on the façade, it should serve as a trim color. Major trim elements include the building cornice, storefront cornice, window frames, sills and hoods, and a storefront frame, columns and bulkheads (including aluminum) and cast iron. All of these elements were usually painted the trim color to provide a contrast or to define the main body (or base) color of the building.

The **MINOR TRIM** should enhance the color scheme established by the base and major trim. Often a darker shade of the major trim can be used to highlight the window sashes, door, and selective cornice and bulkhead details.

The Vincennes HRB has approved four color schemes that can be used it hundreds of different combinations for your building.



Neutral palette

- La Fonda Boulder #3001-10A
- La Fonda Mindoro #1004-10A
- Woodrow Wilson Blush #3002-8C
- La Fonda Wild West Green #6006-4A
- Filoli Honey #3005-6B

Jewel Tone palette

- Oatlands Velvet Night #4001-8B
- Hubbell House Clayo #2006-9B
- Montpelier Red Velvet #1009-6
- Redstone Ponderosa Pine #5004-4C
- La Fonda Ecru #3006-8C

Dark palette

- La Fonda Territory Green #5004-2C
- Lyndhurst Mahogany #2002-9A
- Jekyll Club Cherokee Rust #2011-7
- La Fonda Deep Blue # 4011-7
- Lincoln Cottage Black #4009-2

Bright palette

- La Fonda Jalapeno #6005-6C
- Cliveden Camelback Sofa #3005-3B
- La Fonda Sombrero #2008-5B
- Homestead Resort Tea Room Cream #3004-4C
- Cincinnati Hotel Hunter Blue #4003-7C

