

DESIGN GUIDELINES
for
ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL OF EXTERIOR COLOR SCHEMES
in the
Special Overlay Design Review &
National Landmark Historic Districts

PURPOSE

These Guidelines are established for the following purposes:

1. To supplement land use regulations which encourage and promote public health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Port Townsend.
2. To provide guidance on appropriate color schemes that maintain historical authenticity and character throughout the National Landmark Historic District.
3. To allow for timely approval of color scheme design review applications.
4. To assist decision-making by the Historic Preservation Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council in the review of development applications.

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines correspond to a "palette" of exterior colors that were adopted by the Historic Preservation Committee in 1992. The use of these colors in a manner consistent with the guidelines developed below shall be subject to administrative review. Colors that are not found on the palette may be used by the applicant, but are subject to review by the HPC.

GUIDELINES

1. Exterior colors shall be selected from the approved color palettes and from affinity charts for sash and side walls. There are two color palettes: one for frame buildings and another for buildings that are a combination of materials, such as brick, wood, and cast iron.
2. Three exterior colors (body, trim and sash) shall be permitted for frame buildings.
Four exterior colors (body, major trim, minor trim and sash) shall be permitted for buildings of other construction.
3. Exterior brick walls that are in an unfinished or natural state shall not be painted.
4. Painted brick walls shall be repainted to approximate the color of the natural material; mortar joints may be suggested in a color approximating the natural color of the material. The use of a pure white to imitate natural mortar color shall be prohibited.

5. Consistent with the above-mentioned guideline, side walls of a previously painted brick or masonry building shall be re-painted to suggest the original color of the structural material of the wall, or shall be re-painted with a side wall color listed on the approved color palette.

Front and side wall junctions should be treated sensitively, with the color of the front façade reflecting the thickness of the façade construction on the building's side.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE – FACT SHEET

Exterior Paint Color in the National Landmark Historic District

INTRODUCTION

A new coat of paint is great for a building's appearance and essential for its maintenance. Surfaces must be prepared by removing the old paint, and color schemes should be carefully considered.

Although color choice is largely a matter of personal taste, within the Historic District proposed schemes should be appropriate to the building materials and style of the subject property, and to other buildings in the district.

The Historic Preservation Commission has adopted the following level of review for exterior color in the Special Overlay Design Review District:

The following shall be **exempt** from design review:

- Normal maintenance and repainting of existing buildings without color changes

Shall be subject to **administrative** review:

- Exterior colors selected from the approved color palette.

Shall be subject to **HPC** review:

- Exterior colors other than those found on the approved palette.

In order to simplify the review process for color changes on existing buildings, the HPC has developed a palette of suggested colors for commercial buildings in the National Landmark Historic District. In addition, the HPC provides design assistance in color selection on a request basis. Business and property owners are encouraged to schedule consultations with HPC prior to repainting their buildings.

GENERAL COLOR GUIDELINES

1. Color choice for building exteriors may express individual taste but should always contribute to the historic character of the National Landmark Historic District and should be based upon historical precedent.

2. Exterior colors should harmonize with other colors on the same building and on the streetscape. Exterior colors should complement the colors of neighboring buildings and should not produce an effect of visual competition or discord. Exterior colors should be selected to be mutually supportive and beneficial to the overall historic character of the streetscape.
3. Paint colors that were not produced or used during the late nineteenth century are not recommended for commercial buildings in the Water Street Historic District. This includes bright colors and pastels. Neither is a part of the Port Townsend color tradition; the use would be incongruous with the historic setting. Acceptable colors are termed “tertiary” colors and are produced by mixing two “secondary” colors on the standard color wheel. High gloss paints, other than for sash application, are not recommended.
4. Distribution of color on the primary façade: it is recommended that the base color be applied to all of the walls and to the piers flanking the storefront, unless this upper wall is natural brick or stone. If so, the piers might be painted a color resembling the natural material.

The major trim color would be applied to cornice, window caps, window frames, storefront cornice and columns and bulkheads. The minor color would trim doors, storefront frame and possible small details on cornices, window hoods and bulkheads.

The window sash could be the minor trim color, but historically it was dark green, red or brown. This makes the windows appear to recede and gives the building a richness of depth.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

Building Permits and Pedestrian Protection

Per Section 3303 of the 1997 Uniform Building Code, Protection of Pedestrians during Construction or Demolition, *“no person shall perform any work on any building or structure adjacent to a public way in general use by the public for pedestrian travel unless the pedestrians are protected as specified in this chapter”*.

A 4 foot-wide walkway is required along the building site, and approval of the Public Works Department must be obtained if the walkway extends into the roadway. See the Planning & Community Development Department (PCD) handout, “Site Work, Demolition and Construction” on details on the type of protection required. A building permit is required for construction of railings, fences, and canopies for pedestrian protection. Ask the (PCD) for the necessary forms.

Adopted by Ordinance 2871
November 29, 2004

Director, PCD