Guidelines for Colour

12.0 COLOUR

> **Policy:**
>
> Colour on a building should be used in a manner that blends the building with its context, as well as enhances the structure and its character-defining features.

Note: These Guidelines apply to the design of a new building as well as the conservation of a heritage structure.

Background

While colour in itself does not affect the actual form of a building, it can dramatically change the perceived scale of a structure and it can help to blend a building with its context. In addition, it can tie the building elements together, visually. In short, colour can enhance the appearance of a building, if the colour scheme is chosen carefully.

Colour on a heritage building

With respect to colours on a heritage building, a scheme that reflects the heritage style is preferred, although some new colour selections can be compatible. For a newer building in a heritage district, a colour scheme that complements the heritage character of the district should be used. Property owners are particularly encouraged to employ colours that will help establish a sense of visual continuity for the block. In general, it is best to use colours that were used in the past, which were usually earth tones. This is particularly true for towns such as Rossland. When choosing a colour scheme for a building, keep in mind these factors. When in doubt about historic colours or tones that may have been used on a particular building, it is best to assume a low profile.

For additional information:

Moss, Roger W. and Gail Caskey Winkler. Victorian Exterior Decoration, How to Paint Your Nineteenth-Century American House Historically. *New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1987.*

Schwin III, Lawrence. Old House Colours-An Expert's Guide to Painting Your Old (Or Not So Old) House. *New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1990.*

Alderson, Caroline. "Re-creating A 19th Century Paint Palette", APT Vol. XVI No. 1, pp. 47-56. 1984.

Bock, Gordon. "Colorful Issues In Choosing Exterior Paint", Old-House Journal, pp. 50-55. July/August 1996.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COLOUR

When designing your own colour scheme, consider the entire composition:
*   a) The back plane of the main façade is a major surface for which a scheme should be devised.*
*   b) A colour scheme for the front plane, composed of a porch in this case, also should be designed.*
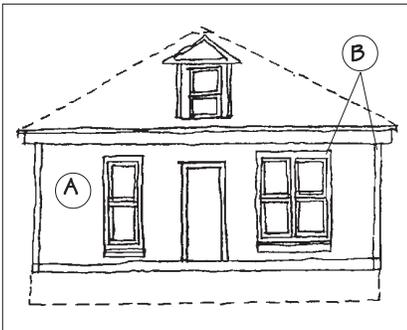
Apply a base colour to the main plane of the façade (A). Next, apply the first trim colour to window frames and edge boards (B).
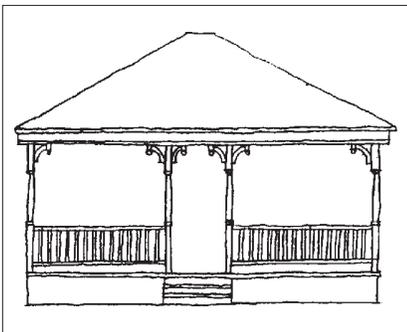
When developing a colour scheme, use a limited number of colours. Apply one or two colours to porch elements; avoid making the scheme too busy. Consider using a different shade of the first trim colour--or even matching it exactly for porch trim.

12.1 Develop a colour scheme for the entire building that coordinates all the facade elements.

Choose a base colour that will link the entire building together face together. For a commercial building, it can tie signs, ornamentation, awnings and entrances together. On residences, it can function similarly. It can also help your building relate better to others in the block. Using the historic colour scheme for a heritage building is preferred.

A mock-up of the proposed colour scheme should accompany any application materials. This mock-up should include both a colour rendering of the overall façade as well as paint colour samples (as provided by the paint manufacturer or supplier).

12.2   Conservation projects should employ the use of colour testing in order to determine what colour scheme was original to the structure.

12.3   Muted colours are preferred for the background colour of most buildings.

A darker background colour will allow you to use lighter colours for trim--where the highlights will show up better. Lighter colours also can be used as a background , but with a light background and accent colour on the trim, the entire scheme is susceptible to becoming too busy. If light background colours are used, it is best to use a different shade of the same hue for the trim. Pastel colours should not be used. Also, matte finishes are preferred to glossy ones.

12.4   Use bright colours for accents only.

Reserve the use of strong, bright colours for accents, such as signs or ornamentation and entrances. In most cases only one or two accent colours should be used in addition to the base colour. Doors may be painted an accent colour, or they may be left a natural wood finish. Historically, many doors would simply had a stain applied. Brilliant luminescent or "day glow" colours are not appropriate.

12.5   Provide a weather-protective finish for wood surfaces.

The rustic bare-wood look is not appropriate in downtown Rossland.

12.6   Leave natural masonry colours unpainted where feasible.

Where the natural colour of a building material exists, such as stone or brick, they should be left unpainted. For other parts of the building that do require painting, select colours that will complement those of the natural materials. If an existing building is already painted, consider applying new colours that simulate the original brick colour.