

A good coat of paint is one of the most important defenses a building has against the elements. Paint forms a hard film that sheds water, the number one source of building damage.

Deciding When to Paint

While neglecting to paint a building can cause exposed wood to rot, too frequent painting can also create problems. Paint only the parts of the building that need painting (for example, when the trim is showing wear).

It's time to paint if:

- The old paint is chipped, peeling, or blistering. Consider only a touch-up in the affected areas.
- Wood is bare. Exposed wood should always be painted to protect it from damage and rot.
- Paint is chipped and peeling, and there are young children living in the building. Deteriorating paint can expose children to lead paint hazards.

Don't paint if:

- The paint is only dirty. Refresh the surface with a gentle washing.
- The paint is intact, but the color has faded. Too many layers of paint can cause paint failure.
- The brick or stone finish has never been painted.

Removing old paint

Chipped and peeling paint must be properly removed to provide a smooth surface for repainting.

Remove deteriorated paint to the next sound layer by hand scraping, followed by light hand sanding. Don't use harsh methods to remove paint, including sandblasting, chemical stripping, pressure washers, rotary grinders, or open-flame torches. These methods can permanently damage brick and wood.

Lead paint will likely be found on buildings constructed before 1975. Be careful when scraping or sanding existing paint. Wet sanding and hand scraping are recommended. Use a drop cloth to collect paint chips and dispose of them properly.

Call the Borough's Code Enforcement Office at 684-2467 for more information.

Oil or Latex?

Oil paint is harder to clean up than latex paint, but oil paint penetrates better, providing a more durable surface. Oil paint is good for areas that receive a lot of use and wear.

Latex paint, manufactured with a water base, is able to "breathe" better than oil paint, allowing moisture in masonry to escape. Latex is easier to apply and easier to clean up. The quality and durability of latex paints continues to improve.

Using oil over oil, and latex over latex, will avoid failure due to incompatible materials. To paint latex over an oil-painted surface, first prime the old surface with a compatible primer. Once latex is applied, you can't go back to oil without first removing all layers of paint down to the bare wood.

Painting Brick

The majority of buildings in Columbia are constructed of brick, with wood trim. In the early 1800s, many brick buildings were painted in various shades of red, which gave the bricks a dark color that was considered more desirable than the lighter natural shade of local bricks. About 1850, it became popular to paint brick buildings in tan or gray colors to look like stone.

Today, deciding whether or not to paint your brick building is a matter of personal choice or circumstances. Consider these guidelines:

- Was paint ever used on the walls? Generally, if the bricks have never been painted and are in good condition, they should not be painted.
- Buildings with glazed bricks with a glossy surface, or multi-colored brick and stone that creates a design, should not be painted.

- If your building was sandblasted, painting the damaged bricks might help to seal and protect the soft outer layer of bricks. (Sandblasting is an abrasive method of removing old paint and dirt that also removes the hard protective outer surface from bricks.)

Choosing Colors

Paint provides protection for the wood elements on your house. The colors you choose are a form of personal expression. Colors can reflect popular styles within neighborhoods, or the individual tastes of the building's current owner.

Your color choice might also be based on historical colors that are appropriate to the age and style of your building. Several paint manufacturers produce historic color palettes, including Sherwin-Williams, Benjamin Moore, and Lowe's "American Tradition" line.

For most property owners, the exterior wood trim is the part of the building that will most often require painting. Whatever color you select, a fresh coat of paint is always better than peeling paint.



PAINTING

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Caring for Wood Windows

Caring for Bricks

Caring for Porches

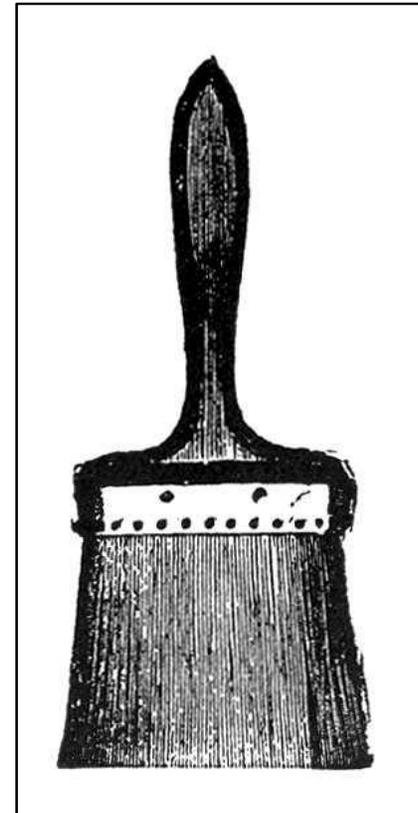
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Historical Architectural Review Board

Borough of Columbia

308 Locust Street

Columbia, PA 17512



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