PAINT COLORS AND MATERIALS

Traditional Colors
Paint colors and the ways paints are applied are important to the character of historic buildings. Owners are encouraged to use traditional colors in historic districts especially to help preserve a sense of order and continuity.

Paint colors in the Virgin Islands have traditionally been conservative - whites, grays, yellows and terra cottas. It is important to preserve these characteristics.

Paint colors in the Virgin Islands were traditionally conservative. Most masonry buildings were given coats of lime wash, usually white, but sometimes tinted a yellow gold or pinkish to terra-cotta red. Wood buildings also were painted or washed white, with other colors, such as gray, becoming more popular during the late 19th century. Shutters and jalousies (interior blinds) were usually red, green, or white; roofs were traditionally dark, iron-oxide red. Modern wall colors such as green, bright pink, or blue were never used, before the post-World War II era. However, they are often now considered "appropriate" for smaller scale buildings.

Paint colors are very important to the overall appearance of a historic area and do much to convey an impression of pride and care for a building. Most importantly, owners should be aware of the impact of their paint colors on the appearance of their street or neighborhood and consider their neighbors when making a selection.

The following are recommended color schemes.
Traditional Paint Treatments

Masonry

The best paint to use for masonry buildings is a simple lime wash, made up of slaked hydrated lime, water and ideally an organic tint. This method requires often annual maintenance, however, but nonetheless can be successful. The addition of white Portland cement to the mixture can help to prolong the life of a wash, however, cutting down on maintenance requirements.

Wood

Wood buildings should be carefully brushed and sanded and then given a coat or two coats of a good quality alkyd paint (oil-based) or a high-quality acrylic latex paint. Generally, oil paint causes less build-up than acrylic latex or latex paint and for many wood buildings is often longer lasting (though recent improvements in latex technology is beginning to change this). Sanding should be done by hand or with a pad sander. Belt and disc sanding gouge wood surfaces and alter their appearance.

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