

## 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.

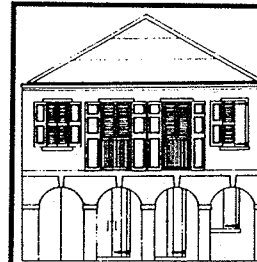


Paint colors in the Virgin Islands have traditionally been conservative - whites, grays, yellows and terra cottas. It is important to preserve these characteristics.

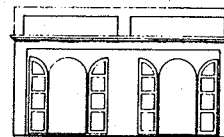
Paint colors in the Virgin Islands were traditionally conservative. Most masonry buildings were given coats of lime wash, usually white, but sometimes tinted a yellow gold or pinkish to terra-cotta red. Wood buildings also were painted or washed white, with other colors, such as gray, becoming more popular 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.

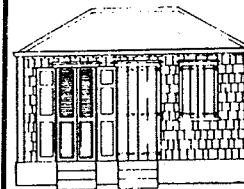
The following are recommended color schemes.



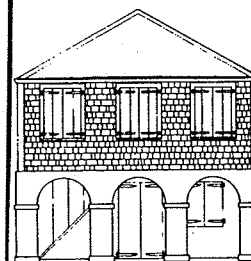
**Walls:** White - Ivory - Cream - Yellow - Gold - Linen - Peach  
**Trim:** White  
**Shutters:** Green - Gray - Red - White  
**Louvers:** Green - White  
**Roof:** Red - Silver



**Walls:** Gold - Yellow - Cream - Ivory - White - Linen - Gray - Peach  
**Trim:** White  
**Shutters:** Green - Gray - Red - White  
**Louvers:** Green - White  
**Roof:** Red - Silver



**Walls:** White - Ivory - Cream - Yellow - Gold - Linen - Gray - Peach  
 Pink - Blue - Green  
**Trim:** White  
**Shutters:** Gray - Green - Red - White  
**Louvers:** Green - White  
**Roof:** Red - Silver



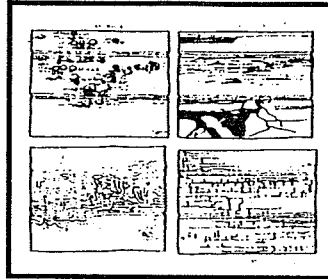
**Walls:** *(If both stories are one color)*  
 White - Ivory - Cream - Yellow - Gold - Linen - Gray - Peach  
**Walls:** *(If each story is different)*  
**Ground Floor:** White - Ivory  
**Second Story:** Cream - Yellow - Gold - Linen - Gray - Peach  
**Trim:** White  
**Shutters:** Green - Red - Gray - White  
**Louvers:** Green - White  
**Roof:** Red - Silver

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.

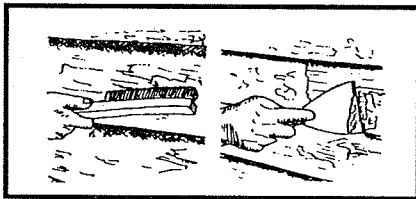


Typical paint problems, clockwise from upper left: blistering, peeling, alligatoring, wrinkling. Blistering suggests a problem with materials. Peeling usually means moisture. Alligatoring is a result of excess paint build-up. Removal may be required. Wrinkling also is a result of built-up.

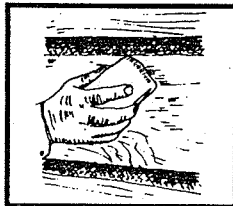
### Wood

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.



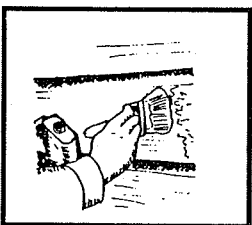
Scraping with a wire brush or putty knife is usually sufficient for preparation.



Always hand sand or use an orbital sander to feather edges.

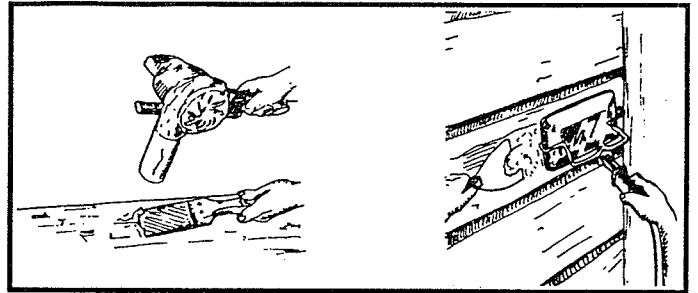
### More Typical Modern Treatments

In the absence of a traditional treatment, flat acrylic latex or latex paints can be substituted for masonry buildings and oil paint or high quality acrylic latex for wood. For masonry walls a more expensive latex acrylic as opposed to a lower acrylic content latex paint is definitely recommended. Acrylic paints allow for some evaporation from the walls and therefore are less apt to flake or fall off in the course of the walls normal wetting and drying processes. Colors can be selected to closely resemble traditional lime washes or oil paints.

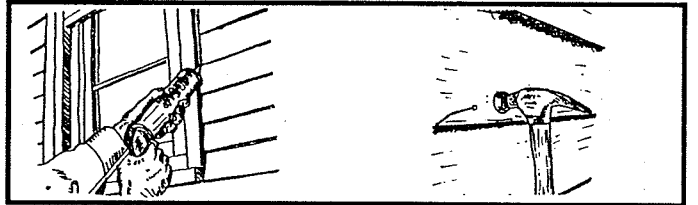


Chemical strippers can be used for build-up problem areas on wood.

Oil paints and high-gloss latex paints are definitely not recommended for masonry walls.



A heat plate or heat gun can be used for paint removal from wood. Great care should be taken to avoid over-heating materials.



Use the opportunity of repainting to caulk edges and reset nails.



A good paint job (or for shingles often a good stain) can help preserve an older building indefinitely.

*For further information contact:*

**The Division for Archaeology and Historic  
Preservation  
Virgin Islands Department of Planning and  
Natural Resources  
Nisky Center, Suite 231  
#45 Estate Nisky  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802  
(809)774-3320  
or  
115 Watergut Homes  
Christiansted, St. Croix 00820  
(809)773-7081**

Prepared By William Chapman  
Layout by Jeanne Strong