

Adopted September 2, 1987

City of Boulder, Colorado, Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

PAINT SCHEMES AND COLORS

Background:

The Landmark Ordinance as amended on December 7, 1982 requires a landmark alteration certificate if a significant change in color is proposed. More and more information is being published regarding the use of historic paint colors. Generally, the smaller houses had simple, plain paint schemes, while larger ones had more elaborate schemes. Many schemes use one body color, a contrasting trim color, and a small amount of a bright accent color. Though a wide variety of choices are possible, the following are some considerations for choosing paint schemes.

Historic colors depended on readily-available pigment sources, with few of our very bright modern colors available;

Some pigments are more unstable under the ultraviolet concentrations of Colorado's high altitude;

A color on a 1" x 1" paint chip will take on a life of its own on a whole house. It is suggested that quart samples of the color scheme should be applied to a section of a building as a test before making a final selection;

A good reference for color schemes is A Century of Color, 1820-1920, published by the American Life Foundation. This book is available at the main library and at Historic Boulder, Inc., 1733 Canyon Boulevard. In addition, it is possible to determine the original colors used on a building.

Guidelines:

Colorado's architectural expressions were conservative, emphasizing muted shades or tones rather than pure hues. Therefore, color choices should not be bright or garish.

In addition, unpainted masonry surfaces should not be painted if subsequent attempts to remove the paint will damage the masonry itself. Masonry with historical significance should remain unpainted.

In some instances, the color of a historic building may be of great significance. For example, all of the houses in Floral Park Historic District are white with green shutters. In this case, the original color scheme should be retained.

Adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board as administrative regulations September 2, 1987.

[signed]

Peter Pollock, Secretary to the Board

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