

Looking after Heritage Buildings

PAINT AND COLOUR

Fact Sheet



Waitaki's 'whitestone' townscapes are sensitive to the use of colour – the light-coloured stone, historically unpainted or limewashed in pale colours is visually cohesive.

Where colour was an integral part of the design of early buildings, the range of colours used was limited. Colour was sometimes added to stone frieze panels or horizontal detail lines to lift the appearance of these structures. The only other colour that appeared was on the doors, door and window frames and sills, and window sashes.

As a contrast to the light stone, these elements were frequently picked out in dark greens, reds, and browns, eg. dark red door and window sashes and dark green frames and sills.

The walls of rendered and weatherboarded buildings up to the Edwardian period usually were painted a light colour reminiscent of stone; most commonly creams, dark creams, fawns, pale green and beige colours. Where roofing was corrugated iron, this was either left unpainted or painted a dark red (usually an iron oxide paint).

Colour schemes of buildings of the Mid-Victorian were usually two colours, walls one light colour and joinery one darker colour. Later buildings of the Victorian and early Edwardian periods were usually a three colour palette, light-coloured walls and two different dark colours to joinery. Striped verandahs were not uncommon.

Lime rendered earth buildings usually had a limewash applied which could be coloured with natural pigments, but usually the same stone colours. Where a pigment was not added, the natural limewash colour would be a grey cream from the impurities of the slaking process. Modern slaked lime is a stark white that is not historically accurate.

From the Edwardian period a four colour palette was more common with additional colours such as salmon, eau-de-nil, often used to pick out details such as eaves

brackets, door panels, bargeboards or verandah decorative elements. In this later period, colour schemes could include the whole building and joinery being painted a dark colour, or a dark colour with light and dark joinery.

Paint may have been applied later to a stone building in an attempt to remedy damp/salt problems. Less permeable finishes, such as oil-based paints, are likely to exacerbate moisture problems. Signs of damage will be bubbling or blistering of paint films and cracking and failure of renders. Water still gets in, but it cannot get out: white powdery salts may be present as well as damage to timber – such as rotting floor joists, flooring, or skirtings.

If exterior painting is necessary:

- Do not paint previously unpainted stonework, render or brickwork etc
- Avoid large areas of bright or colours that do not relate to the period of the building
- Limit the numbers of colours according to the period of the building, ie. Between two and four colours
- Avoid dark monotone colour schemes
- Avoid stripes, (except for verandahs) murals, or colour patterns that don't relate to the facade
- Choose colours that are appropriate to the architectural era of the building

If you are dealing with a listed building or one within a heritage precinct, you will need to apply for resource consent if you are painting a previously unpainted façade. This is unlikely to be granted if the surface is historically significant – such as limestone. You will also need to apply for resource consent to change the colour scheme of the exterior of a building within a heritage precinct. These proposed changes are both considered alterations.

