



## Heritage Fact Sheet Series 4 - Colour Schemes for Historic Buildings and Heritage Conservation Areas



*The following fact sheet provides guidance on painting and colour schemes for properties which are listed as a heritage item or located within the Bellinggen Heritage Conservation Area.*

### Consent requirements

Painting or re-painting the exterior of a property which is listed as a Heritage Item or within the Bellinggen Heritage Conservation Area is a change to the 'fabric finish and appearance' and requires consent, but this can generally be considered under the maintenance and minor works heritage exemptions under Clause 5.10(3) of the Bellinggen Valley LEP 2010. Internal repainting consent applies only to State Listed Heritage Items.

You need to submit the minor works application, or e mail a request to Council with information about your proposed work including the colour scheme and materials. If Council is satisfied that the work is in keeping with the heritage values, it may approve it in writing. This must be in place before you start work.

A hyper link to the Application Form is provided below.

[Apply Now](#)

### Understand the place before making changes.

The use of traditional colours and finishes is important to maintain the significance and character of historic buildings, and to ensure that any infill development is sympathetic to the heritage settings. Inappropriate paint schemes can substantially change the character of buildings and streetscapes by introducing colours and textures which could not have been produced over 100 years ago.

## Historical Background

Up until WW1, paints were made by hand and often on site, and continuing to the 1960s traditional paints were still used on most Australian buildings. Oil paints were generally applied on timber, metal and plaster, while water based washes and distempers were generally used on plasters and masonry surfaces.

The colour palette was made from pigments readily available at the time. This included stone and earth colours, dark reds, greens, creams and browns. Lime white was the traditional white, rather than brilliant white.

Gloss finishes were based on natural oils such as linseed and fish oil. These paints were used to repel water from wood surfaces as well as protecting structural and decorative cast and wrought iron from corrosion.

During the 1920s, ready-mixed, industrially-made paints emerged as petroleum products and synthetic resins became available. From the late 1940s acrylic paints became available which were water based and easier to use but many painters continued to mix their own paint until the late 1960s.

In more recent years there has been renewed interest in paints such as Limewash which is based on traditional mixes and include the heritage colour palette, and which is more suited to historic buildings in aesthetic finish.

## Wall Colours

- Face brick or stone should always remain unpainted;
- Stucco or cement renders were either untreated or finished with pigmented lime wash to emulate a stone colours, especially facades with a classical design;
- Timber weatherboards were painted in various shades of stone colours, creams, yellows and occasionally a red oxide or venetian red to emulate brick.

A traditional paint scheme for a timber dwelling based on original paint scrapes.



Bellingin Court House, with unpainted concrete bricks and a heritage colour palette to joinery and recessed signage panels.



## Joinery/Trim Colours

- Architectural details were highlighted in colours such as Indian Red, Venetian Red, Brunswick and Carriage Green, Tobacco, and Chocolate Brown. Off White and Creams were also used to contrast against brick and stone.
- Black is not a colour represented on the heritage palette although black pigments were used for sign lettering and added to create colours.
- Dark green or red was generally used for cast iron balustrade to make it look robust although some historic photographs show evidence of light colours with dark handrails and other trims.

A good heritage colour scheme for a Federation era house which highlights the details of the façade.



A reverse colour scheme is used here of a darker wall colour contrasts with light trim to highlight the architectural detail of the façade.



## Roof Colours

- Unpainted galvanised roofs characterise heritage items and precincts and should remain unpainted or replaced 'like for like' when necessary.
- In the late 1890s metal roofs were sometimes painted with red oxide to resemble terracotta tiled roofs which were becoming fashionable. The paint also had the effect of further preserving the metal. If already painted they may be repainted to match the original.
- Terracotta tiled roofs should be retained where they are original or appropriate to the era of the building.

Short sheet galvanised roof with a red oxide painted finish.



Terracotta roof on St Margaret's Church.



## Fence Colours

- Light stone colours are historically found on early timber picket fences. Off white is also traditionally used. Bright and dark colours should be avoided for timber fencing.
- Side fences were often left to weather or were protected with oil.
- Cast iron balustrades were usually painted in dark colours.



## Signage

Traditional original signage should be maintained including former names. Modest areas of corporate signage can be used, providing that it does not dominate the building, and is within the original fascia depth and not above awning level. Traditional hand painted signage adds vitality to the streetscape. Illuminated signage needs consent but can enhance a building if well designed.



## Heritage Colour Schemes

Heritage colours are not just cream red and green! A wide range of traditional colours are available. The three main eras of development: Victorian (1837-1900), Federation/Edwardian (1900-1920) and Interwar -Post War (1920-1950) display trends. The use of historic colours appropriate to the era of the building is strongly encouraged. Council's Heritage Advisor has a portfolio of heritage colour palettes from leading paint manufacturers which are available for discussion and use at site meetings.

## Victorian (1838-1900)

Buildings of the Victorian era often boasted intricate decoration using a great variety of colours. Architectural trims were picked out in contrasts. Subtle shades and tones were used to highlight mouldings. Paint effects of marbling, stencilling and wood graining were popular for interiors. These domestic buildings in Bellingden date from this era but do not have traditional colours.



## Federation/Edwardian (1901-1920)

The most prominent Federation era building in Bellingden is Hammond and Wheatley, which was unusual for its concrete construction in 1908. Its exterior colours are a pale vellum with dark green and cream trims. The interior boasts a richly painted pressed metal ceiling picked out in contrasting tones. The verandah soffit is a classic eau de nil. Federation buildings often featured red brick with roughcast decoration, but these are not common to Bellingden.



## Inter War and Post War

The period from 1920-1950, covered a range of architectural styles including continuation of traditional domestic Federation cottages, Californian bungalow designs and Art Deco designs. The interwar buildings feature strongly within the town centre. Colours saw a shift to include more variety with the development of ready-made paint and more choices after the 1930s. The brick buildings of the 1950s are particularly representative of the post war era and should remain unpainted.



## Need further information?

Council offers a free heritage advisory service and offers annual heritage grants to assist owners with re-painting in traditional heritage colour schemes.

For further enquiries please contact Council's Planning Services section on 02 6655 7300 or email [council@bellingen.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@bellingen.nsw.gov.au)