



# External Paint Finishes & Colours

SPG<sup>BH</sup>  
note 2

supplementary planning guidance

## What is an SPG?

*A Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (SPG) is one of the material considerations that can be taken into account when determining a planning application. It is intended to provide helpful guidance for the developer, consistent with the provisions of the Local Plan. This SPG Note is one of a series produced Brighton & Hove Council and it is to be read in conjunction with the Brighton and Hove Local Plan. Each SPG note has been subject to a period of consultation and Council Approval.*

## Introduction

In the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the exterior of Brighton and Hove's stucco buildings were in most cases painted with a coloured wash to look like fashionable stone and to provide added protection for the facade. Subsequently, lead based oil paints were introduced and generally used because of their superior appearance and weathering qualities. Both the washes and the oil paints maintained the texture of smooth stone, enhancing and not obscuring any detailing on the front of the building. The retention of smooth painted stucco on the Regency and early Victorian buildings is essential if the character of these buildings is to be maintained.

The rough finishes of modern textured or 'high build' coatings, now regularly advertised as durable, low maintenance replacements for traditional paint systems have a dull matt appearance. They attract atmospheric dirt and exhibit a total contrast when used alongside smooth painted stuccoed facades. They are often too thick or heavy to be supported on old render and obliterate the fine lines of decorative detail. They should not be used on historic buildings and in the case of listed buildings their use is likely to require listed building consent. Opportunities to remove heavy textured or spray applied paints should be taken, in order to avoid the damaging effects of these materials.

## AVAILABLE FINISHES

**Solvent borne synthetic paints:** These include the normal external synthetic oil gloss paints and others with more elastic/flexible characteristics. Whilst not giving a traditional finish, their smooth, self cleaning shiny look is now well established along the seafront. Ordinary gloss paints last about four years on sound, dry walls. Silicon alkyd paints last five or more. The current trend (for health reasons) is to reduce their solvent content. They are not however vapour permeable and can therefore trap moisture.

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**Water borne synthetic paints:** Water based smooth masonry paints are now increasingly used. They may also be expected to last four or more years depending on location; they are available with a matt or semi-gloss 'satin' finish and are said to be more moisture-vapour permeable. Some claim to be suited for over painting oil-based coatings.

**Organic paints:** these non- toxic paints are now available, in both matt or gloss finish, from specialist suppliers.

**Lime washes / lime based coatings:** these are available from specialist suppliers direct, either ready coloured or to which pigment is added. They are highly permeable, but are only appropriate on unpainted renders.

**Mineral Paints:** these natural inorganic water borne paints penetrate the render coat to give a coloured matt finish; they have long life and high vapour permeability, and whilst intended for application to previously unpainted surfaces, they can be adapted for use over previous sound coatings.

## PREPARATION AND THE NEED FOR OLD BUILDINGS TO BREATHE

The preservation of traditional buildings relies on allowing moisture absorbed in walls to evaporate from the surface. Impermeable paints and hard renders trap moisture and can cause severe damage to walls, structural timbers and interiors and should be avoided.

Whichever paint type is chosen, quality preparation and careful choice of base coats is crucial for long term durability of the coating. The application of paints to new render before it is completely dry will fail. An alkali resisting treatment may also be required. The paint manufacturer's specification and recommendations should always be followed.

Two finish/top coats are always recommended to ensure good coverage and maximum durability.

Consent will be required to paint previously unpainted brick, flint or rendered facades of listed buildings and other buildings in Conservation Areas where an Article IV direction has been made.

## COLOUR

Choice of colours is to some degree a matter of taste, influenced by fashion and by what has already been established in the area. The characteristic brightness of central Brighton and Hove is due to the light stone colours of its terraces.

The following section identifies colours from the British Standard 4800 paint range, which have some historic precedent. Other very similar non standard 'historic' colours, which are now available, would be equally appropriate. The use of intense, dark or primary colours, which are gaudy or which make a dramatic change to the appearance of listed buildings or properties in Conservation Areas, where Article IV Directions are in force, will require planning permission and/or listed building consent, and will normally be resisted.

For some of Brighton & Hove's terraces, crescents and squares, planning regulations restrict painting to a single colour in order to enhance the appearance of groups of buildings designed as a single architectural unit. Those properties affected are listed at the end of this leaflet.

## Rendered Elevations

The covering quality and opacity of the early white lead based colour washes was not very good and, as a consequence, the dark colouring of the Roman Cement render would surface through. The Regency fashion was for paint coatings to imitate the colour of new or weathered Portland or Bath stone. This tradition continued until the latter part of the 19th Century when more diverse colours became available and the fashion for darker more practical colours developed.

Most DIY stores and decorator's merchants have paint mixing machines, which can make up paint colours.

The Council generally recommends the following colours for use on painted facades of 19<sup>th</sup> Century historic buildings:

<b>B.S. No.</b>	<b>Description of Colour</b>		
BS 00.E.55	White	BS 10.B.15	Pale Cream
BS 08.B.15	Pale Pinkish Off-White	BS 08.C.31	Pale Yellowish Cream
BS 08.B.17	Pale Fawn	BS 10.C.31	Pale Cream

The following colours also have some historic precedent and may be appropriate, particularly on detached buildings or where streets exhibit mixed styles. The Conservation Team can advise on their suitability for a particular property. On a listed building, consent may be required to paint the facade in one of these colours.

BS 04.B.17	Pale Pinkish Grey	BS 10.B.21	Light Grey Cream
BS 04.B.21	Pale Grey Brown	BS 10.C.33	Yellow Cream
BS 06.C.33	Rich Cream	BS 10.C.35	Yellow Green
BS 08.B.21	Greyish Fawn	BS 14.C.35	Pale Bluish Green
BS 08.C.35	Yellowish Grey	BS 00.A.05	Grey
BS 10.A.03	Pale Grey	BS 00.E.55	White
BS 10.B.17	Greenish Cream		

## Brick/Flint Elevations

Fair-faced brickwork and flint facing which were meant to be seen should never be rendered or painted over. Where they have been, the Council will encourage careful removal by special techniques which do not harm the original fabric. The exceptions are beach pebble faced buildings, which traditionally in exposed areas were often painted black with cream painted brick detailing, to keep out driving rain. Originally, this would have been done with a black tar and cream lime wash with tallow in it, which allowed water vapour to escape.

## Doors

As with rendered walls, the range of colours was much less extensive than today. Softwood doors were always painted, either white or more usually in bolder colours. The following colours are recommended :

BS 00.E.53	Black	BS 08.B.29	Brown
BS 00.E.55	White	BS 14.C.39	Dark Green
BS 04.D.45	Red	BS 18.C.39	Dark Blue

## Windows

The choice of colours for sashes and window frames in Regency and early Victorian buildings was also originally fairly limited. Whilst for some terraces a colour imitating oak was originally specified, the safest choice and often the most attractive will be to paint windows white or the colour of the facade.

## Ironwork

Although there are examples of Light Brown BS 10.C.35 and Blue BS 18.C.35 having been used, railings and other architectural ironwork was generally painted in darker inconspicuous colours. The nearest modern British Standard colours are:

BS 00.E.53	Black	BS 14.C.39	Dark Green
BS 10.C.39	Dark Brown	BS 18.B.29	Dark Blue

Often black will be the safest colour for area and balcony railings and the most attractive choice particularly in terraced groups. Down pipes and gutters are best painted to match the main rendered facade so that they are not obtrusive. Against brickwork, down pipes look best painted black or dark grey. Original lead rain water pipes should remain unpainted.

## Canopies

Canopies are usually covered with lead and in many cases were originally left unpainted. It seems likely that they were later painted to provide greater weatherproofing for the structure. In most cases the resulting appearance was a question of personal taste or fashion so that some canopies were painted to match the main elevation, some were striped and others were treated with black pitch. As black painted canopies tend to be overpowering, to the detriment of the style of regency buildings, and as a striped effect can be disruptive, it is recommended that where canopies are to be painted they should either match the main elevation or be painted grey BS 00.A.09 to match the original lead covering.

## Above parapet or eaves level

Here it is important that dormers or other additions blend with the roof covering, which is usually slate. BS 18.B.25 Dark Grey with a matt finish is most appropriate.

## Aerials and cables

When repainting, the opportunity should be taken to remove obsolete cables and to tack back loose cables into recesses or behind down pipes in tight runs and painted the background colour.

## UNIFORM PAINTING SCHEMES

A group of buildings, designed as an architectural unit, are best treated using the same colour throughout. Contrasting colours can result in discord, creating an unnatural emphasis to the detriment of the formal design of the square, crescent or terrace. Elsewhere a range of different colours will look right, reflecting the buildings' diverse styles and designs. Matching colour for semi detached properties similarly looks best.

The Council has introduced and enforces a large number of uniform painting schemes. These require that works of external redecoration conform to an approved colour scheme.

Such schemes apply in:

Adelaide Crescent, Arundel Terrace, Brunswick Place, Brunswick Square, Brunswick

Terrace, Chichester Terrace, Lewes Crescent, Sussex Square, Bedford Square, Clarence Square, Clifton Terrace, Hanover Crescent, Lansdowne Place, Lansdowne Square, Marine Square, Montpelier Crescent, Montpelier Villas,

Norfolk Square, Oriental Place, Palmeira Mansions, Palmeira Square, Park Crescent, Powis Square, Regency Square, Russell Square, Sillwood Road and Wykeham Terrace. More may be added, so if in doubt please ask.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you require any further information, including details of particular Article IV Directions and uniform painting schemes, please contact the Conservation and Regeneration Team.