

Legislation Text

File #: 21-4121, **Version:** 1

HLC#21-005: Public hearing to consider a request to repaint the exterior of the J.H. Alexander House at 103 Van Worth Street by Felix Wong on behalf of Bob Neal, owner

The owner of the J.H. Alexander House, c. 1870, repainted the exterior of the house in prior to obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness. The owner's representative is requesting approval of the colors used to repaint the house. Although the house is currently used as an office, Section 3.10 of the *Design Guidelines for Historic Residential Properties* related to color design and paint apply to this building to ensure the house's residential character is retained.

Historically, the colors used at Folk Victorian and early homes were quite simple - a body color and one trim color. These colors were typically light in color, reflecting both the lack of availability of quality darker colors, and the desire for painted surfaces that required little maintenance.

The Commission should consider the following standards when approving paint colors:

- *Choose paint colors based on the building's historical appearance. Selection of paint and stain colors based on research of historic colors and finishes is encouraged.*
- *Body and trim colors should not be similar in hue or tone intensity (i.e. 2 shades of colors that are closely related like green and red or 2 dark or light shades of the same color). Paint colors should be complementary to each other and the overall character of the historic building and should be used to accentuate the building's significant features.*
- *A third color, commonly called an accent color, was quite often utilized to accentuate or highlight a particular feature of a house or building. Doors, window sashes, or special or decorative trim was typically painted an accent color.*
- *The articulation and details of exterior walls, window and doors and openings, trim, scale and texture of exterior materials can be enhanced or obscured by appropriate and inappropriate paint colors selected for a building.*
- *Paint replacement gutters, downspouts, metal frame screen and storm doors and windows, roof-vent assemblies and fire escapes to match the color of the wall, trim, cornice or roof color, whichever is the most effective in reducing the visibility of these elements.*
- *Paint color of skirting at residential buildings shall be appropriate to the structure; a very light color should not be used unless this matches the body color of the house.*

The paint scheme used on the house includes Renwick Heather for the body and a white paint for the trim on the porch, window frames and door frames. The three exterior doors on the house are

painted in a color similar to Stratford Blue, a color suitable for Mid-Century homes.

The applicant is requesting that doors be permitted as a shade related to Rockwood Blue Green from the Sherwin Williams palette. The applicant has indicated the Buckland Blue color on the Benjamin Moore palette as a near match. Under the Commission's procedure, after selecting the base color from the Sherwin Williams palette, an applicant may select a shade adjacent to the same color on the Benjamin Moore palette. The applicant's selection is three rows away from the blue-green paint sample on the Benjamin Moore palette.

While it is informative to know the historic paint colors used at a house, these colors may be considered inappropriate by today's standards or not be desired by the current owner. Paint, as a material finish on wood, is considered temporary and may reflect trends and preferences of the current owner or neighborhood.

Historic Background

The house at 103 Van Worth Street was constructed around 1870 and was the home of James H. Alexander (1827-1909), the first Justice of the Peace in Mansfield. He brought his family of nine children to Mansfield after the Civil War ended. He had owned a large plantation in Rome, Georgia when the War broke out, and he served the Confederate States as Assistant Adjutant General. He was at Vicksburg, Mississippi when it fell.

He settled on a farm east of Mansfield, but moved to the house on Van Worth Street around 1889. The house has been altered from its original condition. The building is a registered Mansfield Historic Landmark.

Staff recommends approval of the body and trim paint colors. Staff defers to the Commission's decision on the door color.

Attachments

Maps and Supporting Information
Applicant's Exhibits