

PROFILES

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Creating a Better Painter/ DESIGNER DIALOGUE

The best way to avoid color collisions is to communicate clearly, so you, the painter, know exactly what the designer is trying to achieve.

DESIGNER'S VIEW

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ALTHOUGH I AM A DESIGNER of interior and exterior color schemes, I was a painter in a prior occupation, so I am well aware that communicating exactly what one wants in the painting of exteriors, particularly the Victorian houses in which we specialize, can be especially difficult because of the intricacies that make up these exteriors. To this end, we have created a method of communication that has proven to be especially clear and easy to use by the painters who make our work a reality. It is, basically, a paint-by-number system, which spells out exactly what colors go where.

It's all based on photographs. We take, or ask our homeowners to supply photographs of every part of the structure. We require



full-view photographs of each side and numerous close-up shots of all the parts: windows, eaves, porches, balconies, etc. If it is a Victorian, we need close-ups of all the bric-a-brac: posts, spindles, brackets, spandrels, etc.

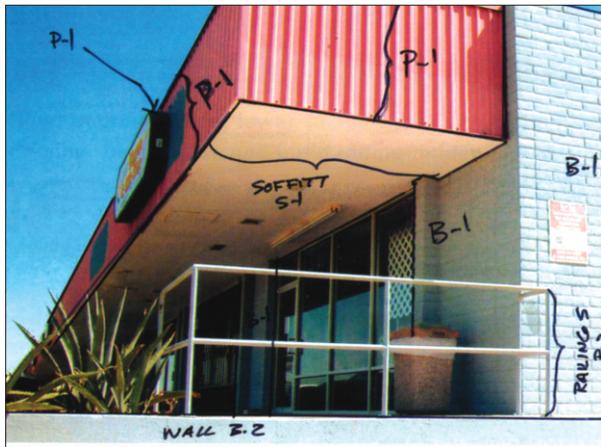
The colors have a nomenclature. B-1 is the main body color, B-2, B-3 designate additional colors used on siding, shingling or whatever else makes up the house's body. T-1 is the trim color; sometimes there are additional trim colors, designated T-2, T-3, etc. The accent or punch colors (for the punch they give the color scheme) are designated by P-1, P-2, P-3. Then they are all charted: B-1 is color HC-43, and so on. We supply paint chips from Benjamin Moore fan decks for each color marked.

Each photograph is marked with a fine-point permanent-marking pen, outlining areas that will be painted all one color and marking the area B-1 or T-1. Every part is marked so it is clear exactly which color goes where, where that color starts and where it stops. When deciding where to

break colors, our biggest consideration is finding the place where it's easiest to cut a line so it's straight and clean.

This is a system any painter can use. If you can talk the designer into doing it for you, great! If not, simply do it yourself. Digital cameras make this extremely easy and cost-effective. The photos can be easily downloaded and printed from your computer, or inexpensive print shops can print directly from the camera's memory card, for those of you who are not computer-savvy.

With photos in hand, it is easy to go over the plan with the designer or building owner and get a clear, precise agreement as to what colors go where. Not only does this keep you from time-



wasting repaints, but it forces the designer to clearly think out what is really wanted. Often, by going over the plan section by section, the designer can see areas that might cause problems—where colors come together in the wrong place, for example.

For interiors, this system works just as well, but we have found it is usually easier to write directly on the unpainted walls in a light pencil. In this case, we usually write the paint number on the wall and designate where colors break with a simple line and arrows that show how color 1443 goes to this line and color 1441 comes from the other direction and breaks at the same line. By doing this with the designer, you can point out where it is easiest for you to cut a clean line and make the job look great.

Another thing we find is that, as designers, it is most important to be specific about finishes. It's not fair to make painters guess which finish to use. With each color, we specify the exact finish by product. We will specify MoorGard® or MoorGlo® finish on this; or we need flat there. This is a simple thing but goes a long way toward easing the painting process.

As a designer I have found that it is necessary for the painter to have a successful experience for the whole job to be a success. I believe it's my job to make your job easier by being clear and specific as to what I want. Unfortunately, many designers don't understand your side of the equation. By presenting designers with ideas such as these, you will not only make your job easier, but, may help them to start designing with the painter as part of the process.

This article is intended as a general guide only. It is recommended that the readers not only rely on this general guide but seek their own advice in individual situations.