

Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

WARNING - Drops of water are destroying historic homes in Forest Grove at an alarming rate. But WAIT, there's a cure, it's called PAINT.

Guidelines for Effective Painting by Larry Wade

Summer is here and all that peeled, blistered, faded, cracked, and outdated exterior paint is staring you in the face. You know you should have started thinking about this last winter, but you also know that the time to paint is now. What to do? Do something, but know that you may not be able to do it all in one summer, or even two.

STEP #1 – Get Water to the Street

Historic homes get destroyed more by neglect than by hurricanes, fires, or termites. Damaging forces on a home are relentless, but none more than rain and its cousins — mildew and mold. Most homes have several built-in safeguards to manage water, and while paint is important, it frequently isn't the most important.

Keep things in perspective. Make sure your roof is in good repair, as well as your gutters, downspouts, and related underground drainage pipes. Are you sure rainwater is getting to the street without first going through your basement, crawl space, or siding? Unless you have designed a water catchment system, any water hitting your roof should end up in the street. Never route it into the sewer.

STEP #2 – Planning

If your home's major water management safeguards are in order, your next priority is usually painting, but you must plan your work. Because painting can be such a daunting task, most homeowners would rather avoid it. If you are one of the lucky ones who can afford to have your house professionally painted, you are indeed fortunate.

Professional painters know the latest techniques, laws, and products, and generally have equipment that provides good service and value. But remember to shop carefully for a reputable contractor. You usually get what you pay for. Check references.

If you are doing the work yourself, there are self-help books at the library, hardware stores, and home centers. There are many useful Web links you can find by searching online.

When most of us think of painting, we focus on the siding, but painting also includes windows, doors, and their respective trim, the fascia behind the gutters, soffits under the eaves, gutters and downspouts, porches, railings, and steps. Color choices need to factor in all these elements as well as the siding.

Historic home colors are usually different than for contemporary homes, and we encourage you to be thoughtful about your color palette. The National Park Service worked with Valspar to research and document about 250 historic home colors, and Valspar sells them through some big-box home centers. We also published an earlier newsletter article on this subject (Spring 2001), and we can provide addresses of Forest Grove homes that were painted with renovation grants provided by the Landmarks Board. Call James Reitz at 503-992-3233.

A few guidelines:

- Consider doing a little every year, to manage both time and expenses.
- If your home was last painted before 1978, pay

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2012 Eric Stewart Award Presented to Reference Librarian and Volunteers

The Eric G. Stewart Award is presented each year to an individual or group for their outstanding service and support of historic preservation in Forest Grove. On May 14, 2012, City Councilor Elena Uhing presented the award to Reference Librarian, Ismoon Hunter-Morton, and her team of dedicated volunteers for preserving and organizing the Eric Stewart Collection.

Eric Stewart was an ardent history buff, photographer, and archivist whose 34-year career with the Federal Government included a stint with the State Department. After retiring to Forest Grove in 1982, Stewart amassed a huge collection of photos and data chronicling local history. Following his death in 1995, his impressive 20-box collection was donated to the City. After the collection sat idle for a decade, Ismoon and her team began the tedious process of indexing, preserving, digitizing, and archiving this amazing historic collection.

To date, Ismoon and her team have processed all paper documents in the collection and have organized, indexed, and are currently digitizing all printed photos. They have also integrated all books from the collection into the reference



City Council member Elena Uhing presents 2012 Stewart Award to Ismoon Hunter-Morgan and some of the volunteers (back row, L-R, Chuck Prichard, Casey Kowalkowski, Jessie Sweeney, and Jane Zilk) Photo credit Beverly Maughan.

section of the Library's History Room. They currently have plans to digitize and organize hundreds of negative strips that remain.

The Eric Stewart Collection is available for public viewing in the Stewart History Room of the Forest Grove Library by appointment with Ismoon Hunter-Morton. She was joined in accepting the Eric Stewart Award by volunteers Casey Kolakowski, Linda Lee, Mitch Perdue, Chris Potter, Charles Pritchard, Don Santo, Jessie Sweeney, and Jane Zilk.

Effective Painting (from page 1)

close attention to lead-based paint issues. Lead is dangerous and can reduce children's IQ, and those under age ten are most vulnerable. Research how to properly test for lead paint and test all layers. Exposure to lead puts workers, residents, and neighbors at risk, as well as future generations if residue is left behind. Little children can eat paint chips.

STEP #3 – Preparation

Many agree that painting is relatively easy but preparation is very hard. Before doing any prep work, drape and protect the work area. Carefully wash and scrub surfaces to remove dirt, mildew, decomposed paint, bird dew – you name it. This usually means gentle hosing, hand rubbing, rinsing, applying TSP, and rinsing again.

Never paint when wood has high moisture con-

tent (see <http://www.newalbanypreservation.com/uploads/File/PaintandWindows.pdf>). Frequently, this means you shouldn't power wash. If you do, plan for a long drying period, and test to ensure moisture content is less than 15% before starting. Painting over wet wood dramatically shortens the life of your paint job, requiring you to repaint again sooner. Don't get trapped by the old adage, "Never time to do it right, always time to do it over." If you have professionals doing the work, insist on and monitor their moisture testing if they power wash.

Remove blistered paint (never sand lead-based paint), repair or replace damaged wood, prime with a high-quality, oil-based primer, and caulk gaps and cracks.

After prepping a manageable portion of your home (side, section), apply paint. Don't let elapsed time spoil the preparation.

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Effective Painting (from page 2)

Many professional painters use spray equipment because it saves time and money. However, there are trade-offs with spraying and some experts recommend hand brushing only because it applies more paint and allows better quality control. If you can afford a painter who prefers brushing, consider this option.

Because painting is so time consuming and expensive, consider doing one side each year. The south and west sides of houses usually have the most

sun exposure. Apply your efforts to the greatest need.

STEP #4 – Paint (finally)

After getting this far, you may be tempted to conclude that painting can wait until next summer. Maybe you'll get serious about planning sometime next winter. In the meantime, mow your lawn. Hit the beach. And perhaps walk around your house and look for any loose paint that really ought to be corrected next summer, if not sooner.

2012 Preservation Fair by the Landmarks Board a Big Success

On May 5th, the Historic Landmarks Board kicked off National Preservation Month by offering our second annual Preservation Fair at historic Central School. The event was free to the public and featured 14 organizations specializing in historic preservation.

The Fair's 14 exhibitors displayed their products and services, gave presentations, and offered demonstrations. Highlights included home energy audit demonstrations at a nearby historic home performed by Community Action's Energy Conservation Team, a presentation on how to protect historic homes against earthquake damage by Earthquake Tech, and behind-the-scenes tours of Central School by historian, Mary Jo Morelli, of Sojourn Tours.

Other preservation experts manned booths featuring a variety of different trades and skills including:

- Weston Homes and The Golden Rule — building contractors specializing in historic home restoration
- Pacific University and Washington County Museum — information about historic photo preservation
- Forest Grove Library — information about the Eric Stewart Collection and other resources
- Architect Kerry VanderZanden — historic remodels and neighborhood-compatible new construction
- East Portland Sash and Carpentry — specializing in wood window preservation
- David Hunter certified arborist — information about preserving aging tree health
- Indow Windows — information about their innovative indoor storm window system
- Joy Sears State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) — information about national and state preservation issues
- Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board — information about the Renovation Grant Program
- John L. Scott Reality — offered answers about historic home marketability

Attendees, both visitors and vendors alike, commented that this year's Preservation Fair was a great success and a wonderful way to learn about and promote many different forms of historic preservation. The Historic Landmarks Board looks forward to an even more successful event next year.



Jim Duncan (l) and Gene Maliza (r) staff the Weston Homes/Golden Rule booth (photo credit Neil Poulsen)

\$\$ *MONEY FOR PRESERVATION* \$\$

Is your house on our local historic register, or a contributing building in one of the historic districts? If it is, did you know that your house may be eligible for restoration / rehabilitation grant funding? The Historic Landmarks Board has funds now to help you with your projects. If you are planning any exterior restoration work such as restoring architectural features, have structural work to do such as foundation or porch repairs, even exterior painting or re-roofing, we'd love to help. We fund projects up to 50% of the cost of the job per grant, up to \$1,000 (less for painting and roofing). We can also help you find historically appropriate solutions to challenges you may have. Contact James Reitz at 503-992-3233 or jreitz@forestgrove-or.gov to explore the possibilities.

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