Painting traditional timber houses

BRISBANE CITY

Dedicated to a better Brisbane

A GUIDE FOR PAINTING BRISBANE'S TRADITIONAL TIMBER HOUSES

Federation house with contrasting verandah and side walls. (Image source: Brisbane City Council)

Brisbane's traditional 'Queenslander' timber and tin houses are part of our city's unique identity. Architectural style and colours evolved over time, making paint a significant feature that also helped to prevent building deterioration.

This fact sheet covers:

- how to identify the architectural style of your home
- colour schemes that reflect architectural periods
- general guidance for painting and maintenance.

Contents

Approvals

Works to Local heritage places

Some painting projects may require a development approval.

Brisbane Local heritage places are protected under the Heritage overlay of the local planning scheme, *Brisbane City Plan 2014* (City Plan).

If your property is a Local heritage place, you may require approval. Works that will have more than a minor impact on the cultural significance of a heritage place require development approval.

Minor works that have no impact, or no more than a minor impact, on the cultural significance of a heritage place may be eligible for an exemption certificate.

Before starting a project, visit brisbane.qld.gov.au and search 'heritage properties' and 'heritage exemption certificates' or call Brisbane City Council on 3403 8888 and ask to speak with a Planning Information Officer.

For more information about heritage places and their values search Local Heritage Places online.

State heritage places

The Queensland Government is responsible for assessing and approving works on State heritage places, which are places identified in the Queensland Heritage Register and are important to Queensland. For more information, visit qld.gov.au and search 'changing or developing heritage places'.

Understanding architectural styles

Traditional 'Queenslander ' timber and tin houses varied in form, material, detail and colour, depending on the time period and architectural style in which they were built.

In Brisbane, key traditional housing periods were:

- Victorian (1840s–1890s)
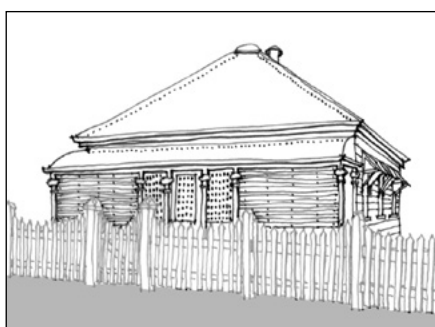- Federation (1890s–1910s)
- Interwar (1915–1940).

Identifying the period (historical timeframe) and style (architectural characteristics) of traditional housing can help guide traditional paint colour selection. For example in Brisbane, colonial style houses were built during the Victorian period. There can also be an overlap of architectural styles across the different periods as styles gradually changed over time.

The illustrations below show examples of Brisbane's traditional housing styles for each period.

Victorian period (1840s–1890s)
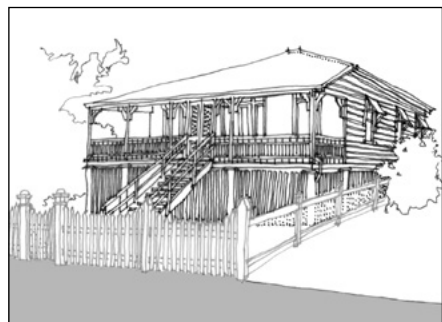

Gable-roofed cottage
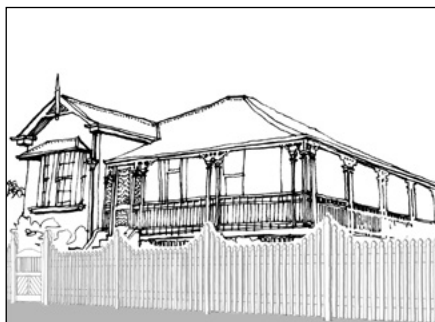

Pyramid roof

Hip-roofed house with encircling verandahs

Federation period (1890s–1910s)

Bungalow

Asymmetrical bungalow

Queen Anne style

Interwar period (1915–1940)

Porch and gable

Multi-gable

Californian

Investigating original house colours

Heritage consultants

Consultants can undertake a colour study that will help to determine the likely original and subsequent colour schemes of your house. A colour study will account for the impact of fading, pollution or other factors on the original paint colours.

Do your own investigations

Underneath external fixtures like electrical conduits and downpipe brackets are good places to look for original paint. Internal paint clues may be hiding in out-of-sight places like the top of doors or windows, or above picture rails and behind cupboards.

How to undertake your own investigation

- Scrape back areas of paint in an inconspicuous area.
- Use a sharp knife or surgical scalpel to cut diagonally across the paint coatings.
- Where possible ensure the sample includes the substrate (base material) e.g. timber.
- Apply oil or glycerine to the paint scrape to help bring out the colour.
- Take a small sample (25 mm²) for colour matching by a paint manufacturer.

A paint scrape analysis or investigation of out-of-sight places can reveal early colour schemes.

Tips:

- Investigate different areas of a wall or feature for possible colour variation.
- Record the location and colour of each scraping from the base layer to the current layer.
- Learn how colour fades to help identify changes.
- Distinguish the original finishing coat from the primer or the undercoat.

WARNING: Do not inhale paint dust. Older paints may contain lead. Wear a respirator mask with the appropriate safety rating when removing paint. Visit the Queensland Government website for more information about 'Lead-based paint' and 'Working with lead-based paint'.

Other sources

Other sources can support paint scrape analysis with clues about a building's colour scheme or construction period.

Source	Use
Historical images	Images do not show exact colours, or any if black and white, but may help identify light and dark painted elements.
Other buildings	Compare your place with professionally restored buildings from the same period.
Original specifications	Original specifications, drawings and sketches and early paintings can help to identify original or subsequent colour schemes.
Period publications	Refer to relevant editions of publications such as *Home Beautiful* and *The Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland*, available from the State Library of Queensland.
Living memory	Neighbours or previous owners and occupants may remember your house colour or have photos or other relevant records.
Archives	Search the Council library and Brisbane City Archives, State Library of Queensland, or ask your local historical society for information.

Selecting coatings and finishes

Lime and cement-based washes

Best application: masonry walls

Lime and cement washes provide a durable matt finish for rendered masonry walls as these contain no waterproofing ingredients and allow excess moisture to evaporate. Limewash was an early form of paint comprising water, lime and pigments. Cement-based washes appeared later and are commercially available in a range of colours.

Wash finishes are difficult to remove, so only use them in an original location.

Brick wash

Best application: bricks

Brick wash is a thin red wash that improves the impermeability and appearance of poor-quality bricks without altering the finish and colouring.

To create an effective, low-cost brick wash:

- melt about 113 g glue size (animal glue) with about 18 L water
- while hot, add approximately 453 g alum
- when cool, stir in pigment (powdered red oxide)
- test colour and adjust by adding Spanish brown tint or red oxide as required.

Acrylic (latex) paints

Best application: fixed timbers and joinery

Acrylic paints are the most common paints for interiors and exteriors and are resistant to weathering, discolouration and cracking from sun exposure. The paints are thin, easy to apply and fast drying, allowing surfaces to be re-coated several times.

Acrylic is best used on external joinery, as painting on moveable parts may result in stuck fixtures e.g. windows.

Acrylic is not suitable for masonry walls as it can trap moisture, damage brickwork, or blister and crack.

Oil stains

Best application: external trims and panels

Oil stains are a popular external finish for traditional Queensland timber buildings. The stains are a mixture of oxides and linseed oil. Burnt amber (brown) and burnt amber and red oxide (red brown) are commonly used. Yellow colour oxides are less common.

To create an oil stain:

- mix together approximately 1 kg colour oxide and 5 L pale boiled linseed oil
- add turpentine to help the stain penetrate timber.

Oil (enamel) paints

Best application: windows and doors

Oil (enamel) paints comprise a zinc oxide and titanium dioxide base (originally white lead) with linseed oil and a colour tint. Enamel paint was used for interior and exterior coatings on a variety of surfaces.

Gloss enamels were traditionally used on timbers requiring moisture resistance. Varnish topcoats were then applied for a harder wearing surface, commonly in high-use areas like kitchens.

Varnishes

Best application: interiors

Varnishes are oil-based and can be thinned using spirits. Mostly used on wood or metal, varnishes applied over paints, stains or bare timber produce a glossy hard-wearing finish. Varnishes are less weather resistant, so are mostly used on interior surfaces.

Choosing a colour scheme

Using best practice principles to choose external paint will help to achieve an authentic colour scheme that suits the traditional house character and your individual preferences.

How to choose a traditional colour scheme

- Identify the building style and construction period.

- If possible, determine the original colour scheme, e.g. paint scrape analysis.

- Decide a colour scheme that was available and in use during the relevant period.

- Identify placements of paint tones using photographs of houses in the same period.

- Check paint suppliers for ready-made traditional paints or paints that can be made with traditional ingredients. Whenever possible, use environmentally safe and non-toxic paints.

- Avoid toning down colours, as traditional paint colours were visually rich in tone and hue.

- Only paint elements that are, or have been, painted. Paint-free elements should remain unpainted, but unfinished timber may need oil, wax or tung oil for protection.

- Paint modern elements in a simplified colour scheme to enhance the original house details.

- Do not use a clear finish on external joinery.

- Do not use water-based primers, undercoats and finishing coats when painting iron.

Colour schemes and examples

This fact sheet provides information about housing colour schemes based on paint colours available during traditional periods. Examples show how a typical colour scheme was applied to different housing styles and can be use on any house style from that period.

Colour standard

This fact sheet defines colours according to the Australian Standard AS2700:2011 Colour Standards for General Purpose and provides a name and code for easy identification.

Monitor and printer calibrations can vary how we see colours, so it is best to view true colours on an AS2700 colour chart available from proprietary paint companies. Sample paint pots are an inexpensive way to test and compare colour schemes on small areas before fully applying a final selection.

Tonal variations indicate contrasting colours of walls, window frames, joinery and rainwater goods. (Image courtesy of State Library of Queensland)

Victorian colours (1840s–1890s)

Gable-roofed cottage
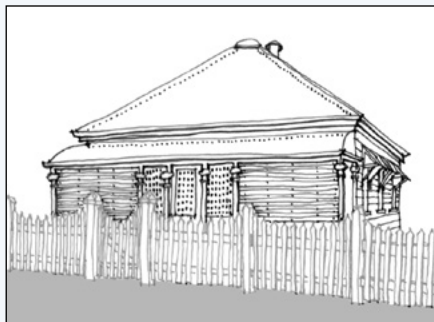
Pyramid roof

Hip-roofed house with encircling verandahs

During Queensland's Victorian period, timber was more economical and readily available than brick or stone. Most houses had timber framing and cladding with a corrugated galvanised metal roof and were painted or stained for weather protection. Colour schemes were typically restrained, with pigments creating stone-like creams, buffs, ochres and other variations mixed by painters.

The Victorian period produced both simple and elaborate housing styles. Simpler houses were less detailed, with simple verandah posts and colour schemes. Elaborate houses had more detailed joinery and colour schemes, including light colours on side and rear walls and a different lighter colour on the verandah wall. A contrasting dark colour was often used on verandah railings and window frames.

Timber joinery was highlighted in light colours such as muted light creams and warm whites (bright whites were unstable and prone to fading). Trims such as gutters, downpipes, front doors and handrails were typically painted dark colours like deep red, deep green and charcoal grey. Soffits, window hoods and verandah ceilings were often painted light green.

Number of colours

- Simple houses: 3-4 colours.
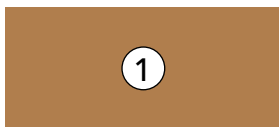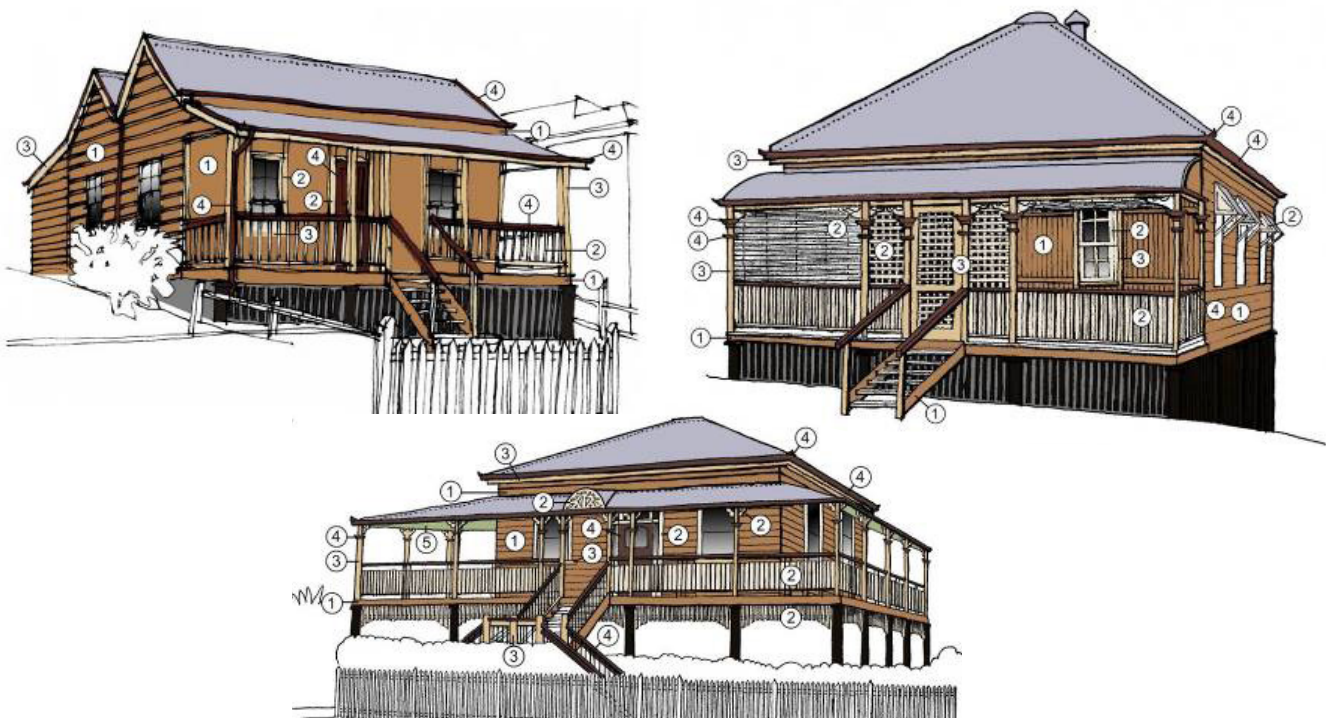- Elaborate houses: 4-9 colours, including creams or off-whites.

General colour guidance

Building feature	Guidance
General	Common colour schemes used stone-like creams, buffs and ochres with contrasting feature colours.
Walls	Stone colours for lining boards , weatherboards and chamferboards. Front verandah wall same or lighter than side and rear walls.
Front doors	Commonly 2-3 colours, one dark colour and contrasting lighter colours on panels and mouldings. Same colour selection used on all verandah joinery.
Windows	Sashes, frames and sills may have been different colours.
Joinery	Light cream and warm whites for joinery. Cream and off-whites for verandah balustrade, brackets and lattice/fretwork.
Verandah margins	Below balustrade, sometimes along stair edges and stringers.
Soffits and ceilings	Light green soffits and verandah roof underside (metal).
Rainwater goods	One contrasting dark colour, also used on front doors and handrails.

Walls

Nut Brown (X55)

Coffee (X52)

Buff (X41)

Deep Stone (Y55)

Wombat (X61)

Biscuit (X42)

Oatmeal (Y54)

Sand (Y44)

Oyster (N41)

Koala Grey (N45)

Light features

Manilla (Y45)

Cream (Y34)

Warm White (X33)

Magnolia (X32)

Driftwood (X34)

Off White (Y35)

Palm Green (G44)

Contrast features

Maroon (R65)

Deep Indian Red (R64)

Dark Brown (X65)

Red Oxide (R63)

Venetian Red (R62)

Dark Green (G61)

Deep Bronze Green (G63)

Zucchini (G67)

Graphite Grey (N65)

Example Victorian colour scheme 1 (typical) – buff, cream, red

1 — Coffee (X52)

Walls

Verandah margin

Stair stringers

Stair framing

4 — Deep Indian Red (R64)

Gutters and downpipes

Gutter flames

Barge rolls

Doors

Capitals

Astragals

Handrails
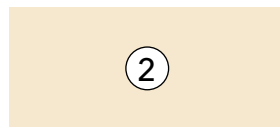
2 — Warm White (X33)

Window frames

Window hood framing

Verandah balustrade

Verandah roof framing

Verandah brackets

Front door frame

Lattice screens

Arched fretwork

Batten screening

5 — Palm Green (G44)

Verandah ceiling lining

Soffits

3 — Sand (Y44)

Windowsills

Fascia

Bargeboards

Wall framing

Architraves

Verandah door frame

Verandah posts

Handrails
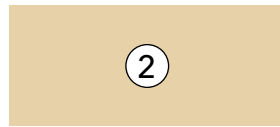
Verandah margin

6 — Black (N61)

Stumps

Undercroft battening

Example Victorian colour scheme 2 – warm grey, cream, green
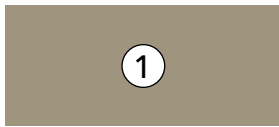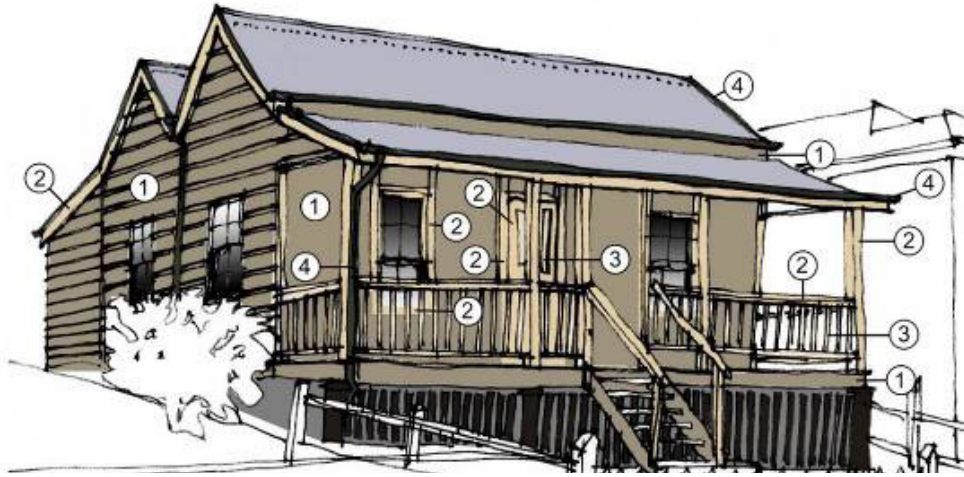
1
Oyster (N41)

Walls

Verandah margin

Stair stringers

4
Deep Bronze Green (G63)

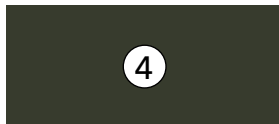Gutters and downpipes

2
Manilla (Y45)

Bargeboards

Fascia

Windowsills

Wall framing as door and window architraves
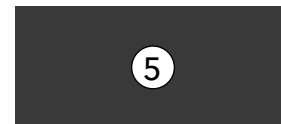
Front door

Verandah posts

Handrails

3
Warm White (X33)

Window frames

Window sashes

Front door panels and mouldings
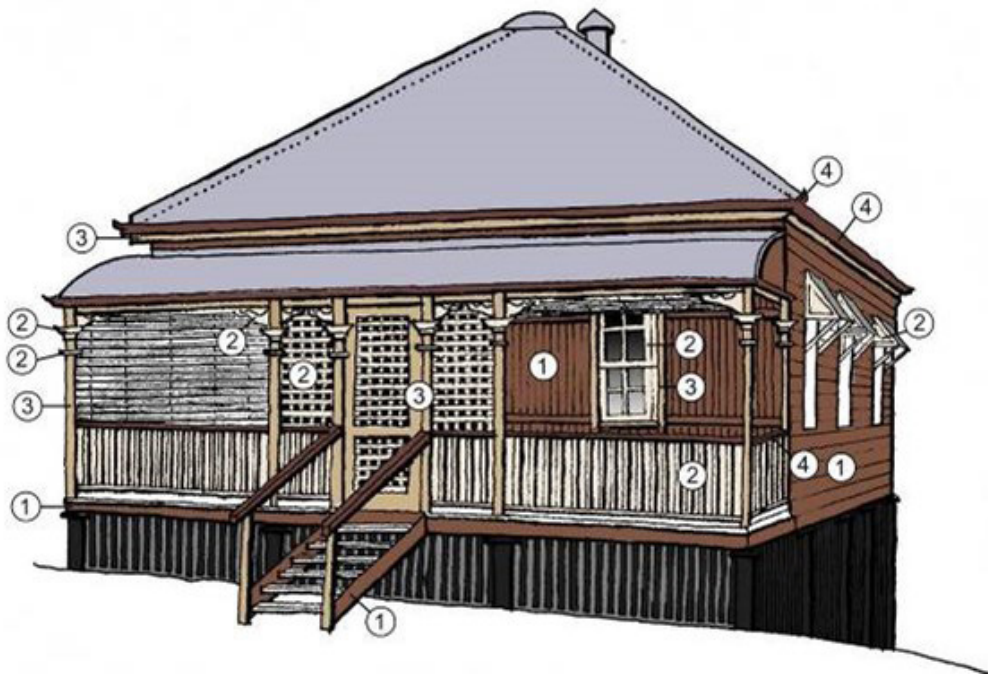
Verandah roof framing

Verandah balustrade

5
Black (N61)

Stumps

Undercroft battening

Example Victorian colour scheme 3 – brown, stone, dark red
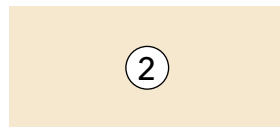
1	**2**	**3**
Nut Brown (X55)	**Warm White (X33)**	**Oatmeal (Y45)**
Walls	Window hood framing	Fascia
Verandah margin	Window frames and sashes	Lattice gate stile and rails
Stair stringers	Verandah post, brackets, capitals and astragals	Windowsills
Stumps		Wall framing
Undercroft battening		Door and window architraves
		Verandah posts
		Verandah margin
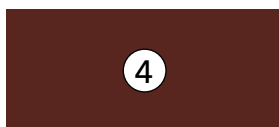
4	**5**
Deep Indian Red (R64)	**Black (N61)**
Handrails	Stumps
Gutters and downpipes	Undercroft battening
Gutter flames	
Front door	

Example Victorian colour scheme 4 – warm stone, grey highlights
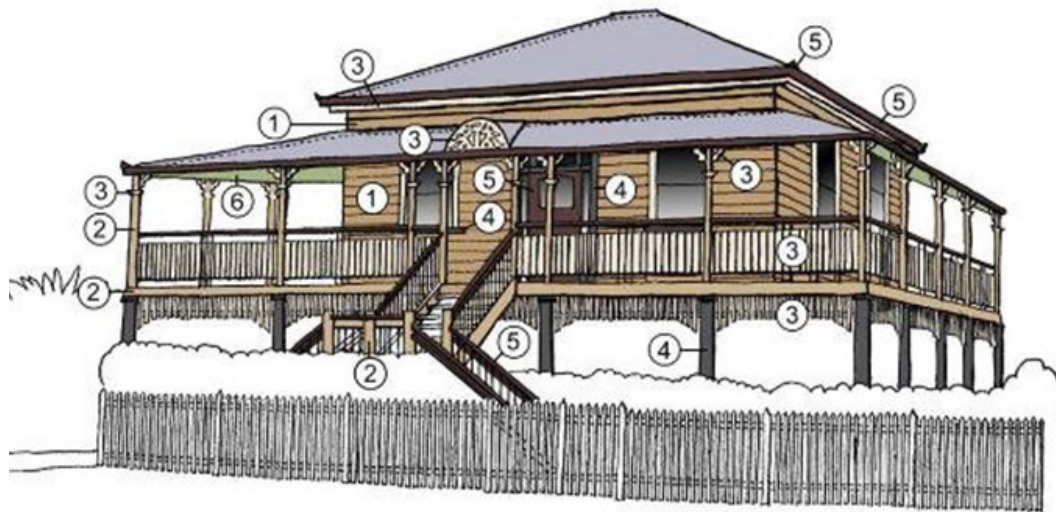
1

Deep stone (Y55)

Walls

4

Graphite Grey (N64)

Windowsills

Door frames, transom, fanlights

Stumps

7

Black (N61)

Stumps

Undercroft battening

2

Oatmeal (Y45)

Verandah posts

Verandah margin

Stair stringers

Stair framing

5

Deep Indian Red (R64)

Gutters and downpipes

Gutter flames

Front door

Handrails

3

Warm White (X33)

Window frames

Window sashes

Fascia

Verandah brackets and astragals

Verandah balustrade

Verandah roof framing

Arched fretwork

6

Palm Green (G44)

Verandah ceiling lining
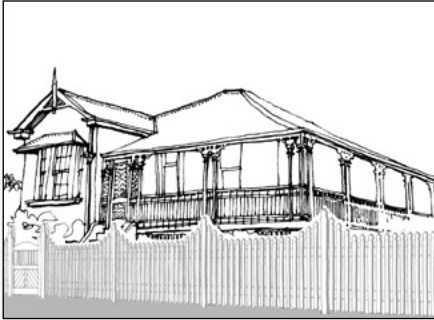
Federation colours (1890s–1910s)
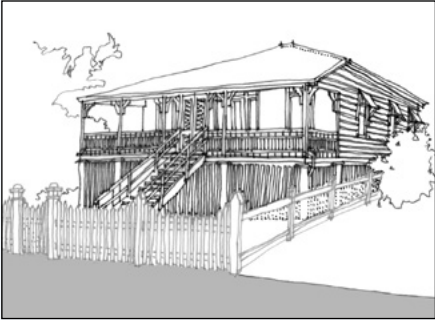
Bungalow

Asymmetrical bungalow

Queen Anne style

Queensland's 'timber and tin' housing continued into the Federation period, with some changes in building form and details influenced by leading local architects, the southern states and overseas architectural movements.

The structure of Federation houses was often expressed as a decorative feature. These houses included asymmetrical designs, single roof planes that ran from the ridge to the verandah edge, different verandah layouts and often bolder detailing.

Colour schemes became simpler, with features articulated by light and shade rather than decoration. Doors and architraves were typically one colour, while verandah posts, balustrades and brackets were another. Common colour schemes included oxblood reds, creams and greens.

Number of colours

- Simple houses: 3 colours.
- Elaborate houses: 4 colours.

General colour guidance

| Building feature	Guidance
General	Common colour schemes used deep reds, creams and greens.
Walls	Stone colours and dark stains to weatherboards and chamferboards.
Windows	Light-coloured sashes and frames. If handrails are painted a dark contrasting colour, windowsills should match.
Joinery	Whites and off-whites.
Verandah margins	Below balustrade, sometimes along stair edges and stringers.
Soffits and ceilings	Cream or off-white to soffits and verandah roof underside (metal).
Rainwater goods	One contrasting dark colour. Sometimes handrails painted in same colour.

Federation residence 'Brighton' in West End, c. 1910, shows mid-toned weatherboards, light-coloured joinery and a striped window hood.
(Image courtesy of State Library of Queensland)

Walls

Red Oxide (R63)

Nut Brown (X55)

Brown (X54)

Coffee (X52)

Buff (X41)

Pale Ochre (X21)

Deep Stone (Y55)

Chamois (Y52)

Oatmeal (Y54)

Sandstone (Y53)

Light features

Manilla (Y45)

Cream (Y34)

Warm White (X33)

Magnolia (X32)

Parchment (Y43)

Off White (Y35)

White (N14)

Surf Green (G43)

Contrast features

Maroon (R65)

Deep Indian Red (R64)

Dark Brown (X65)

Red Oxide (R63)

Venetian Red (R62)

Dark Green (G61)

Deep Bronze Green (G63)

Black Olive (Y61)

Zucchini (G67)

Eucalyptus (G52)

Example Federation colour scheme 1 (typical) – cream, brown, olive
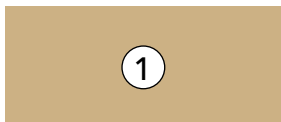
1 — Oatmeal (Y54)

Walls

Verandah margin

Stair stringers

4 — Chocolate (X64)

Masonry base, steps and piers

Chimney
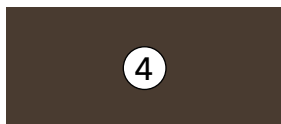
2 — Off White (Y35)

Gable features

Bargeboards and fascia

Eave soffits and rafters

Window hood framing

Window frames

Window sashes

Doors and framing

Verandah balustrade

Verandah posts, bracket, astragals and valance

Verandah gate

Verandah margin

Stair framing

3 — Black Olive (Y61)

Handrails

Windowsills

Gutters and downpipes

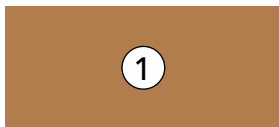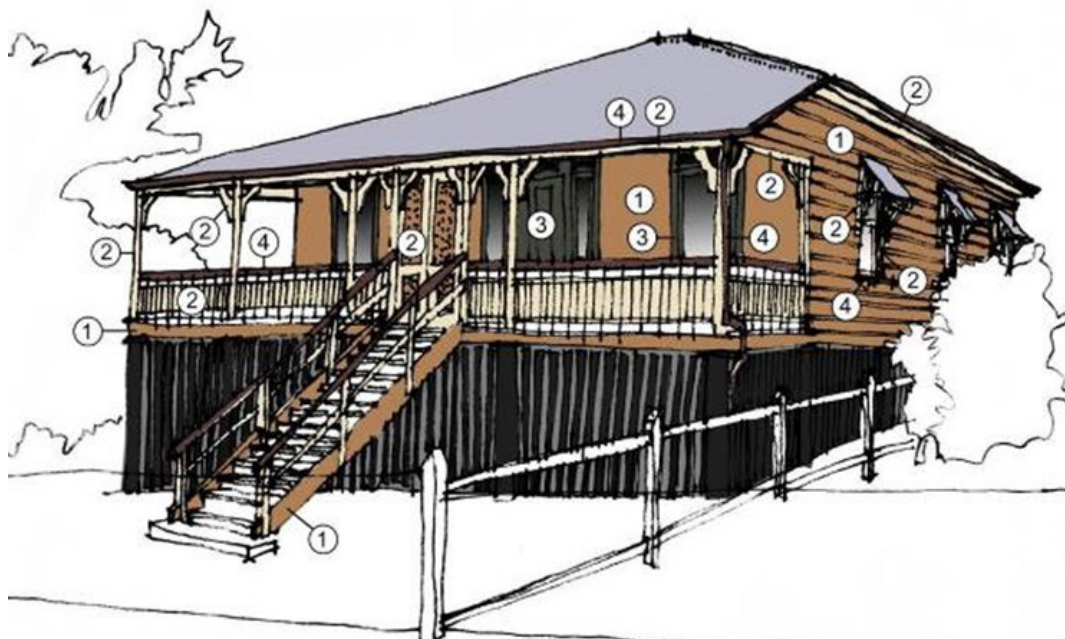Front door and sidelights

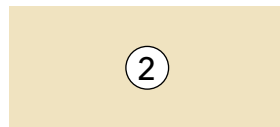French doors and door framing

5 — Black (N61)

Stumps

Undercroft battening

Example Federation colour scheme 2 – buff, dark green, dark red

1 Coffee (X52)

Walls

Verandah margin

Stair stringers

Detailing to lattice gate

2 Cream (Y34)

Bargeboards
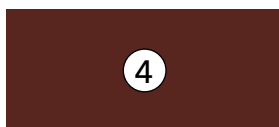
Fascia

Eaves soffits

Verandah framing

Verandah posts and brackets

Verandah ceiling lining

Verandah margin

Window hood framing

Window frames

Window sashes

Stair framing

3 Deep Bronze Green (G63)

Front door and sidelights

French doors

Fanlights and transoms

4 Deep Indian Red (R64)

Handrails

Windowsills

Gutter and downpipes
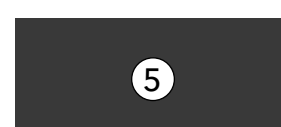
5 Black (N61)

Stumps

Undercroft battening

Example Federation colour scheme 3 – stone, cream, green

1

Chamois (Y52)

Walls

Verandah margin

Masonry piers

Masonry stairs
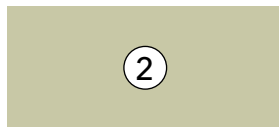
2

Surf Green (G43)

Gable end screen

Finials

Bargeboards

Fascia

Verandah posts, bracket, capitals and astragals

Handrails

Front door and sidelights

Window framing

Window sashes

Windowsills

Batten screening

Arched valance

3

Deep Bronze Green (G63)

Gutters and downpipes

Barge rolls

Threshold to the door

Example Federation colour scheme 4 – red oxide, white

1

Red Oxide (R63)

Walls

4

Deep Indian Red (R64)

Gutters and downpipes

Masonry base

Masonry steps

Chimney

2

Off White (Y35)

Gable end screens

Window frames

Window sashes

Windowsills

Doors and frames

Verandah balustrade, handrail and valance

3

Sandstone (Y53)

Bargeboards

Fascia

Exposed rafters

Soffits

Verandah posts

Interwar colours (1915–1940)

Porch and gable

Multi-gable

Californian

Queensland's California Bungalow designs were substantially different from the styles of the preceding periods. They were typically asymmetrical with battened gables and decorative bargeboards. Verandahs had paired posts, weatherboard piers and slat balustrades. Some designs used notched weatherboards to simulate shingled gable ends and bay window skirts.

Like the preceding periods, Interwar colours included traditional creams and buff. Bolder statements were made with large blocks of rich colour or white against a deep contrasting background colour. Walls were often stained with dark oil finishes. Gable ends were a different colour to the walls and had contrasting half battens.

Interwar colour schemes typically included red oxide walls with cream joinery and dark green rainwater goods. Other schemes used greens and greys.

Number of colours

- Simple and elaborate houses: 3-5 colours

General colour guidance

Building feature	Guidance
General	Large panels of contrasting colour, particularly on gable ends. Some warm grey colours were used.
Walls	Darker staining on weatherboards and chamferboards.
Windows	Sashes, frames and windowsills all painted same colour.
Joinery	Light colours, white, off-white or cream.

Interwar house with stained walls, light joinery and mid-toned gables. (Image courtesy of State Library of Queensland)

Walls

Chocolate (X64)

Dark Brown (X65)

Maroon (R65)

Red Oxide (R63)

Nut Brown (X55)

Brown (X54)

Coffee (X52)

Buff (X41)

Sandstone (Y53)

Deep Stone (Y55)

Holly (G12)

Rainforest Green (G15)

Eucalyptus (G52)

Koala Grey (N45)

Cloud Grey (N22)

Light features

Manilla (Y45)
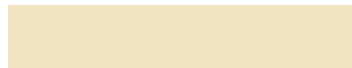
Cream (Y34)

Warm White (X33)

Magnolia (X32)

Parchment (Y43)

Off White (Y35)

White (N14)

Pearl Grey (N11)

Contrast features

Maroon (R65)

Deep Indian Red (R64)

Chocolate (X64)

Red Oxide (R63)

Venetian Red (R62)

Cinnamon (X45)

Golden Tan (X53)

Pale Ochre (X21)

Deep Cream (Y25)

Chamois(Y52)

Dark Green (G61)

Deep Bronze Green (G63)

Black Olive (Y61)

Zucchini (G67)

Eucalyptus (G52)

Example Interwar colour scheme 1 (typical) – cream, brown, white

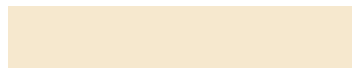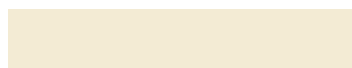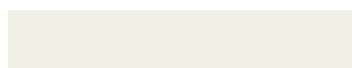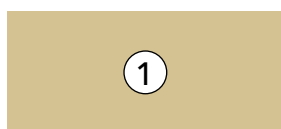|		
1 Sandstone (Y53)	Walls Verandah margin Stair stringers Brick piers	

2 White (N14) Bargeboards Fascia Exposed rafters and outriggers Gable end panels Gable half-battens Gable diamond	Decorative panel (skirt) below window Window frames Window sashes Windowsills Doors and frames Verandah posts and brackets Verandah balustrade Verandah lattice panels Arched batten valance Stepped stair balustrade	

3 Chocolate (X64)	Gutters and downpipes Stepped stair vertical framing Gable end panels Gable half-battens Verandah posts Handrails Front door and sidelights Stumps Undercroft battening Lattice gate

Example Interwar colour scheme 2 – red oxide, dark green, light grey

1 Red Oxide (R63)

Walls

Verandah margin

Stair stringers

4 Black (N61)

Stumps
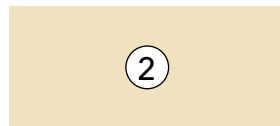
2 Pearl Grey (N11)

Bargeboards

Fascia

Eaves, rafters and soffits

Verandah roof structure

Verandah brackets

Undercroft battening

Gable half-battening

3 Deep Bronze Green (G63)

Gutters and downpipes

Gable end panels

Handrails

Verandah posts

Doors

Stepped stair vertical framing

Lattice gate
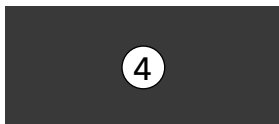
Example Interwar colour scheme 3 – grey, green, white

1
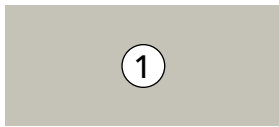
Grey Cloud (N22)

Walls

Verandah margin

Stair stringers

2

White (N14)

Bargeboards

Fascia

Gable outriggers

Eaves, rafters and soffits

Verandah framing, columns, brackets and balustrade

Arched valance

Verandah soffit

3

Eucalyptus (G52)

Gutters and downpipes

Gable end shingles

Handrails

Doors

Stepped stair vertical framing

4

Manilla (Y45)

Lattice panels

Gable diamonds

5

Black (N61)

Rear stumps

Rear undercroft Battening

Example Interwar colour scheme 4 – brown, stone, green

1

Chocolate (X64)

Walls

Brick piers

4

Deep Stone (Y55)

Gable infill

2
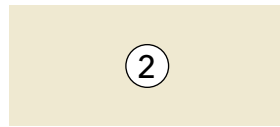
Off White (Y35)

Bargeboards

Fascia

Eaves, soffits

Verandah framing, posts, balustrade and handrail

Window frames

Window sashes

Outriggers

3

Rainforest Green (G15)

Gutters and downpipes

Gable half-battening

Undercroft battening

Front door and side lights

5

Black (N61)

Stumps

Undercroft battening

Undertaking and maintaining paintwork

Engaging a professional

Engaging a professional painter can result in a better-quality finish. Ensure the painter is suitably experienced and there is a clear agreement on the specifications for undertaking the work. Work specifications should include information such as:

- City Plan details about the property being included in Heritage or Character overlays
- scope of work, including a detailed paint colour scheme
- identification of which areas and features are to be painted, stained or left unfinished.

Protect surrounding areas

To isolate and protect surrounding areas, ensure drop sheets, scaffold screening, safety barriers and signage are in place before starting any works.

Cleaning surfaces

- Dust and/or wash painted surfaces with mild detergent to remove cobwebs, dirt, dust, grease and other foreign matter.
- Clean water-soluble finishes with a dry brush.
- Use a mild antifungal solution to clean mould-affected areas.
- Remove loose, flaking paint and rust by scraping, sanding or brushing with a stiff plastic brush (wire brushes can cause rust stains) to provide an even and sound surface.
- Remove wallpaper if applicable. Record and store any original wallpaper for possible reproduction and reinstatement.
- If wallpaper cannot be removed, thoroughly wash surfaces with fresh water and seal with a suitable sealer.
- Ensure powdery limewash and calsomine coatings are thoroughly washed.
- Sand, prime and undercoat all new and repaired timber to ensure a good bond with undercoat and finishes.

Repairing surfaces

- Fill all surface cracks and holes then sand to the appropriate finish.
- Remove defective window putty and re-putty windows as required.

Removing paint

- Leave as much of the original paint layers as possible.
- Remove newer paint coatings and only repaint areas that were originally painted.
- Avoid unnecessary stripping to limit damage to the original paint or substrate.
- Except for painted cast iron, never remove paint with disc sanders, orbital sanders or sandblasting, as these methods will damage the original layer or surface.
- When removing paint from chimneys on a galvanised metal roof, be aware that alkaline paint remover run-off can corrode the roof metal.
- Inspect all paintwork with a tradesperson to detect and note unsound surface areas requiring repair and attention.

Painting

- Only paint when the temperature is between 10°C and 40°C and avoid painting surfaces exposed to direct sunlight in hot weather.
- Test paint colours and finishes in a small area to help fine tune the selected colour scheme, which can look different in a matt, gloss, or semi-gloss finishes.
- Where possible, paint over existing paint to retain evidence of early colour schemes.
- Ensure a minimum of 2 finishing coats are applied to all surfaces.

Powder coating

Where possible, powder coat metals to provide a better finish, particularly for cast iron details and balustrading. Powder coating involves:

- removing the feature
- sandblasting its surface
- engaging a professional to bake the coat
- re-installing the feature.

Limewashed masonry

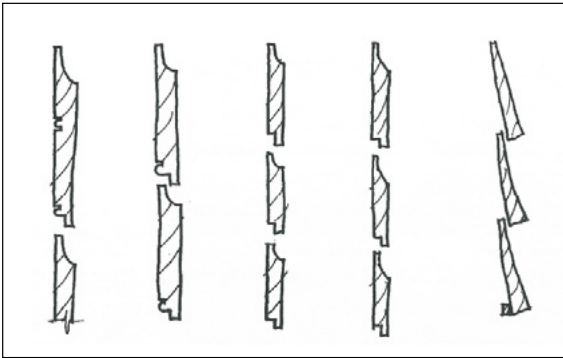Repaint limewashed masonry buildings with limewashes to maintain the original weathered appearance.
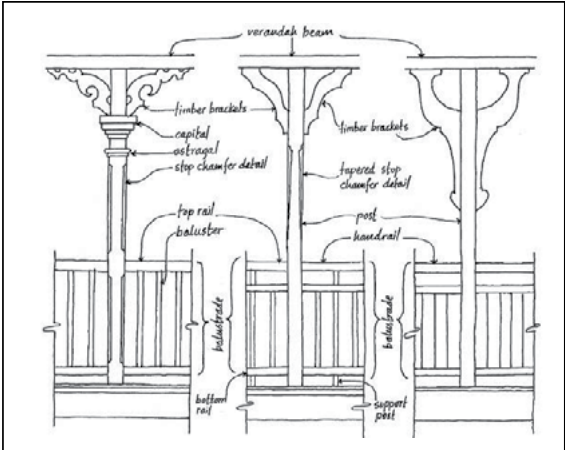
Maintaining paintwork

Basic maintenance will help to preserve paint finishes. It is important to:

- keep painted surfaces clean
- rejuvenate painted surfaces periodically with fresh paint to slow deterioration and prevent water from penetrating cracks and damaging layers underneath.

Terminology

The following glossary includes paints and finish terminology.

Term	Definition
Acrylic (latex) paints	Water-based emulsion paints made with synthetic binders that have resins of polyvinyl acetate (PVA), acrylic or a copolymer.
Alkyd paints	Weather-resistant paint made of synthetic resins that have replaced traditional mineral-based paints.
Anaglypta	Popular in the Victorian era, anaglypta is an inexpensive light-weight embossed material used on ceilings, uneven surfaces, and as a dado instead of more expensive materials.
Binder	Liquid in paint that holds pigment particles that then adhere to the surface when dried.
Brick wash	A thin red wash used to improve the impermeability and appearance of poor-quality bricks without altering the finish and colouring.
Casein	Derived from curd separated from whey in soured milk, then washed, dried, ground to a powder and emulsified.
Chalk	Soft white limestone.
Chalking	A fine powder on paint surfaces caused by the release of pigments from paint binders that have deteriorated under weather exposure. Some chalking is produced by self-cleaning paints subjected to weather conditions. Under extreme weather chalk residue can potentially run, staining nearby surfaces.
Cladding (exterior)	Traditional exterior wall cladding is often called 'weatherboard'. Exterior cladding was either a softwood chamferboard or rough sawn hardwood weatherboard. The boards were overlapped for weatherproofing and fixed horizontally to the timber frame. Image: Illustration of chamferboard (left, centre) and weatherboard (right).
Creosote (coal-tar creosote)	A wood preservative. It is not available for domestic use in Australia.
Dado	A decoration or finish on the lower part of an internal wall. It is often a darker colour than the rest of wall.
Distemper	A mixture of water-based paint, pigments and glue size or casein binder that creates a flat finish for indoor walls. It can also refer to an oil-bound distemper containing a drying oil.
Emulsion paints	Acrylic or vinyl paints containing a water-based binder, suitable for exterior and interior use. Although water resistant, these porous paints allow vapour penetration, making them unsuitable for wet or damp surfaces.

Term	Definition
Enamel paint	Generally oil-based paints that offer a high gloss and hard finish. Some enamels are created by mixing varnish into oil-based paint.
Flock	A surface coating of tiny material particles that create a velvety texture.
Frieze	A decorative horizontal band between the cornice or ceiling and the picture rail, typically painted, stencilled or papered.
Gable end	The triangular wall under the roof's end, often featuring a decorative timber screen, half-battening, vents, finials or timber cladding.
Graining	The act of reproducing the decorative qualities of natural wood graining by working semi-transparent glazes over a solid painted colour.
Joinery	Finer woodwork that joins wood pieces together, such as door and window frames. Verandah joinery includes brackets, capitals, astragals and balustrades. Image: Illustration of verandah joinery.
Kalsomine (calsomine or calcimine)	Porous, water-based wash of whiting and colour dissolved in water and held together with glue size. This was the trade name for distemper and commonly used on interior walls and ceilings until the late 1930s.
Lamp black	One of oldest manmade pigments comprising free carbon, produced by incomplete combustion of waste coal tar products or substances such as tallow, beeswax and linseed. The pigment produces a low-intensity blue-grey colour when mixed with white.
Lacquer	Clear or coloured varnish that dries through solvent evaporation and curing to produce a durable finish in various sheen levels. Shellac refers to modern lacquer-based varnishes, while lacquer refers to other polymers dissolved in volatile organic compounds. Lacquer is more traditional and provides a more durable, highly polished and lustrous wood finish.
Limewash	Exterior finish using lime and water, tinted pigments, and often blended with cement or hot-applied with tallow, glue size and salt. Its permeability makes it ideal for masonry walls as it does not retain moisture.
Lincrusta	A durable surface created with linseed oil, fillers, and machine embossed to form low-relief patterns or designs, primarily for dado areas in high-traffic areas.
Linseed oil	Also known as 'flaxseed oil', linseed oil is a clear or yellowish drying oil derived from flax seeds, primarily used as a carrier in oil paints to enhance fluidity, transparency and glossiness.

Term	Definition
Marbling	A painting treatment that creates a polished marble effect on surfaces.
Ochre	One of the oldest pigments, ochre is a yellow earth pigment derived from sand and clay, combined with silica, alumina and hydrated iron oxide.
Oil paint	Waterproof paint that consists of pigment, resin, solvents, driers and additives, and commonly used in wet areas and building exteriors.
Paint	Paint is a protective and decorative coating for various surfaces and consists of a binder, solvent or base, and pigments for colour.
Pigment	Pigment alters reflected light colour through selective absorption. It must have high tinting strength and stability at room temperature. Usually in dry powder form, pigments are mixed with a neutral or colourless binder to provide colour.
Primer	An initial paint coat to establish a stable surface for subsequent layers.
Rainwater goods	Rainwater goods include metal gutters, downpipes, and decorative elements like flames (acroteria), ridge cresting, and weathervanes. Image: Rainwater goods. Flames usually matched the colours of rainwater goods.
Single skin	A single layer of vertical join (VJ) boards that provides both the internal and exterior wall of a place. Single skin walls are common under verandahs and may be reinforced with timber cross-bracing.
Size (glue size)	A gelatinous solution, traditionally used as a binder in water-based paint. Premium quality size was made by boiling animal hides.
Soffit	The underside of verandah roofs, open or covered to form a ceiling. The lining beneath eaves are also soffits.
Scagliola	Imitation polished stonework made from fine Plaster of Paris and glue embedded with marble pieces and gypsum.
Shellac	A coating made from purified lac dissolved in alcohol.
Slaked lime	Calcium hydroxide created by combining quicklime with water, left to slake for a minimum of 2 weeks before application. Caution: mixing these ingredients generates heat, posing potential hazards.
Solvent	A dissolving or diluting agent used to form a solution when mixed with other substances. Water is the most common solvent.

Term	Definition
Stippling	A decorative effect created by striking a newly painted surface with a stippler tool. Broken colour effects can be achieved by applying additional colours over a pre-existing painted base and striking this surface with rubber stipplers of diverse patterns and shapes.
Stump	Wooden posts that elevate traditional timber houses to create an undercroft. Stumps under high-set houses created undercrofts for car storage or laundry facilities. For a traditional appearance, stumps should be painted a matt black or charcoal colour.
Substrate	A material or surface such as plaster, wood or render on which a decorative finish like wallpaper or paint is applied.
Terebene	A special chemical mixture used to accelerate the drying of oil and alkyd paints and varnishes. It can be used to revive slow-drying old paint and varnish that has been stored for an extended period.
Undercoat	Paint coatings applied over a primer or existing painted surfaces to prepare a suitable base for the final coat.
Undercroft battening	Battening or lattice placed between stumps in scalloped and arched styles to enclose an undercroft.
Varnish	A transparent, usually glossy, hard, protective finish or film applied over wood stains. Varnish is traditionally a combination of a drying oil, resin, and a thinner or solvent with no pigment.
Verandah margin	A painted strip approximately 300 mm wide (3 boards) along the verandah and stair edges that helps shield the outermost floorboards from weather damage. Image: Painted verandah margin and stair edge.
Whitewash	See 'limewash'.
Whiting	A blend of ground and pulverised natural chalk with a small amount of glue size to create distemper.

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