

Uptown *Country*

A farmhouse façade gets a more refined look.

BY JAMES MARTIN AND MEGAN SCHLEGEL

This house would be a dream home for most people, but it was actually built as the caretakers' home for a large estate along the Great South Bay of Long Island in 1877. Now this farmhouse in Islip, New York, is its own building, sitting on one acre and boasting three outbuildings as well. And while it's wonderful that so many of the original buildings and the property's charm have been maintained, the house often felt like it was lost amid the other buildings and expanse of land.

When Peter and Jean Freeman first bought the home, the outbuildings were painted in barn red with white trim, which felt too much like a barnyard to them; instead, they hoped to convey a more formal country feel. They painted the house and buildings in gray with a lighter gray trim to achieve the desired effect. However, over time, they began to feel that the house was too monochromatic and did not properly emphasize the architectural details. When the Freemans contacted us, they weren't opposed to their color scheme but felt the details could be better highlighted in a subtle, refined way that could convey an English country feel rather than a farmhouse or wildly colored "painted lady."

Since they wanted their home to feel welcoming and comfortable, the first thing we did was warm up the main body color by using a warm buff with a slight gray undertone. This helped create a pleasant, appealing canvas upon which other colors could be used to highlight the architectural details. The new color was also a better complement to the copper gutters and roofs that had a beautiful verdigris patina from their close proximity to the ocean, which was one of their original inspirations for a color scheme. In trying to convey an English cottage/country feel, we kept the body color lighter and fresher, and then used a soft creamy white for the main trim. This gave depth to the color scheme yet created enough contrast to subtly set off elements such as the windows and porch.

The porch's single color did nothing to highlight the gorgeous turned spindles, spandrel and columns. But in bringing out those details, it was important that we used soft, subtle colors on the fretwork so that the porch didn't look disjointed from the rest of the house. This is especially important on a home such as the Freemans', where the porch is off to one side and there is no place to balance the use of color on the other side of the home. Thus, we used a soft, dusty coral on the scrollwork, columns and spindles as well as on the scrollwork in the peak of the front gable to accentuate this delicate detail. We used

the same color on the scalloped shingles and doors of the outbuildings to incorporate the outbuildings and their individual elements.

A blue-gray green was used for the shutters and spindles. We painted the majority of the spindles in this color to balance out the use of the color on the shutters. This rather ambiguous color will look different depending on the time of the day, lighting, time of the year, etc. The obscurity of the color adds interest and depth to the color scheme without calling undue attention to itself. It was the finishing touch to the English country look we were hoping to communicate through color.

The last color we chose was deep charcoal for the main entry door. It added a base note to the symphony of colors as well as a tinge of drama that also helped to tie in the recently replaced gray shingle roof. Used sparingly on the outbuildings, this color also helped to connect them to the main house and highlight their own particular details and features.

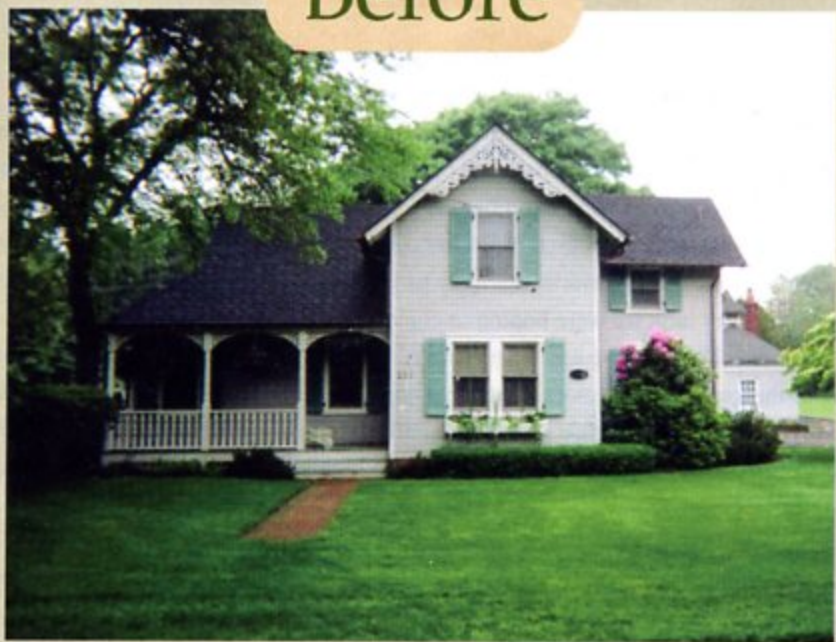
The Freemans' hopes for a cottage home have now been achieved, with the paint colors creating the ambience they were looking for while also creating a beautiful backdrop for their colorful, lively landscaping. The home now has a relaxed, comfortable feel that invites you to kick up your feet, sip on a cup of tea and admire the lush surroundings while enjoying the fresh salt air. ❁

Megan and James are colorists with The Color People and have been designing color schemes for historic buildings for more than 25 years. They can be reached at www.colorpeople.com. To submit your home for consideration in the column, please send your contact information, along with high-resolution jpegs of your home, to: editorial@victorianhomesmag.com. Please put "Color Worksop" in the subject line.

After



Before



After

