

Painting for Personality

A bed and breakfast puts its best façade forward.

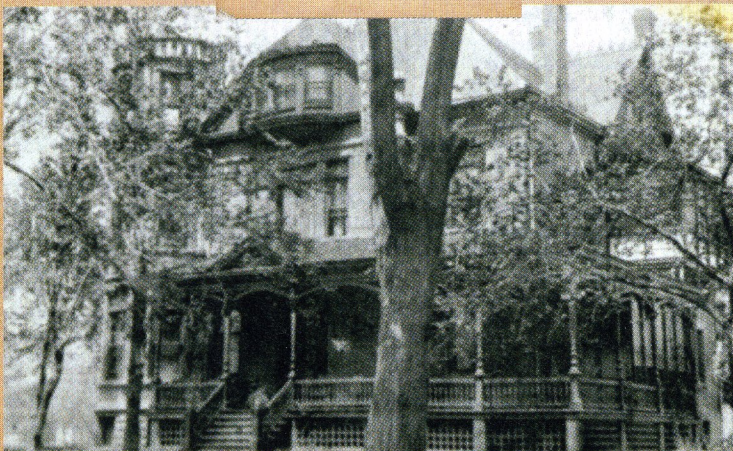
BY JAMES MARTIN AND MEGAN SCHLEGEL

In 1890, John Mouat, a Scottish immigrant who made his fortune in the lumber business, decided to erect a monument to his success. He built a grand brick mansion in a new area called The Highlands and spared no expense showing off his lumber expertise by selecting various species of woodwork for each room: From oak to mahogany, cherry to walnut, each room had its own ambience.

One hundred years later, Walter Keller, a man captivated by the house, entered the picture. At that time, however, the house was in great disrepair. Over the years it had evolved into a flophouse where a murder had once taken place. The interior was mostly gutted, much of the grand woodwork had been removed for salvage, and the city was ready to tear it down.

A three-year restoration project ensued with the goal of creating one of the finest bed and breakfasts in Colorado. The home's exterior needed its porches rebuilt, the brick cleaned and pointed, and the stone repaired, among other extensive tasks. Luckily, small portions of the original front and back porches remained at the entrance. Keller was able to use them as templates, and both porches were rebuilt as exact replicas of the originals. He recognized that making the exterior aesthetically pleasing was a key factor in selling his new bed and breakfast, aptly named The Lumber Baron Inn. He knew that potential customers would need to appreciate the exterior before they would take a chance on walking through the front door. So Keller hired us to

Before



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After



design a color scheme to emphasize the home's history and give it curb appeal.

But even more than curb appeal, how a bed and breakfast looks and feels has a distinct impact on business. Bed and breakfasts need to attract people who are new to that hospitality format. Often, when couples travel, the man may want to stay in a familiar hotel; the woman, however, wants to try a bed and breakfast. A successful bed and breakfast looks enticing and creates enough curiosity that a couple will often decide to take a chance on it. Once they've experienced it, the innkeepers are usually able to quickly turn them into converts.

All this is possible because the appearance of the inn charmed them. A good paint scheme is the most inexpensive, cost-effective way to make your business stand out and sell itself.

A decade later, after much success with such specialties as murder mystery weekends, wine sampling dinners, historic scavenger hunts and tours of the historic neighborhood, Keller found his business gravitating toward weddings.

Couples are always looking for memorable locations for their big day, and The Lumber Baron proved particularly well suited to weddings. Large enough to accommodate indoor services, it was also graced with a sizeable backyard perfect for outdoor weddings. A sandstone patio and gazebo serve guests well during such an occasion. Keller began renting out the entire inn to wedding parties on weekends. He recognized that a shift to accommodate the wedding business would bring new opportunities, so he approached us once again to help transform the mansion's overall ambience for the occasion.

For this new color palette we moved away from the original historic look and created something lighter and more whimsical. We used a bright cream for the trim and sash color, and then washed the house details with a sparkling blend of periwinkle blue, turquoise, lavender and silver. All of these colors complement the traditional bridal white and play nicely against the warm red floral tones often used during the ceremony.

We avoided an overly feminine look, to include the groom and his best men. The result was a wonderful fresh feeling.

One visual treat was the use of color on the balustrade on top of the turret. We designed its color scheme similar to a tiara—a special and subtle touch. The result has been an enormous success. ❧

Megan and James are colorists with The Color People, and they 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 Workshop" in the subject line.

