

The Delight *is in the Detail*

The new owner of this New York home realized that a house deserves the same amount of love on the exterior as the interior.

BY JAMES MARTIN AND MEGAN SCHLEGEL
AFTER PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICTORIA MCCARTHY

When Deborah Schiavo and her two children had outgrown their smaller home in Pelham Manor, New York, they didn't need to look much farther than their own backyard for their new home. Deb was immediately attracted to a large handsome stone and shingle Victorian nearby and set out to continue the restoration process started by the previous owners of 20 years. While a great deal of effort had been spent on the interior, the exterior landscaping and color scheme was in need of the same attention. Deb happily jumped in with both feet.

Although it lacks a high level of ornamentation, this Queen Anne farmhouse, built in 1879, boasts many wonderful features, such as the various brackets, some with delicate scrollwork; circle appliques; stone pillars and a three-story stone chimney. However, the light gray—almost white—body color and dark-red trim did nothing to highlight any of these details. Drawn to shades of dark purple, green and dark yellow, Deb was looking for a color scheme that was dignified and warm, and was also hoping for more of the features to be highlighted in a subtle, yet noticeable, manner.

When our company begins designing a color scheme for a home, the first thing we do is sit down and get to know the house a little bit better. We look at the features and design a color scheme that creates balance and symmetry from the top of the house to the bottom. The challenge with this home is that while each story has a wonderful frieze and brackets, each story is different and, more importantly, the window placement in relationship to the frieze is also different on each story. The third-story gable actually does not have a frieze but instead has a large trim board above the bay with unique circle appliques that are not found anywhere else on the house; however, the windows are nicely framed by molding that connects to the window trim. While there is a frieze on the second story, the windows actually are placed within the frieze. The first-story windows are below the frieze but have no molding or trim like the third story. To achieve balance and symmetry in the color design, we needed to use paint in such a way that it would create that balance—even where it doesn't exist, architecturally speaking.

To warm up the entire feel of the home, we started by selecting a deep, luxurious golden-wheat color for the main body. This is a very historical-feeling color that added immediate warmth to the entire home yet really played up the gorgeous stone pillars and chimney. Instead of making the stone feel like an afterthought, the new body color helps

draw out some of the rich golden tones in the masonry and helps it become an integral part of the overall color scheme.

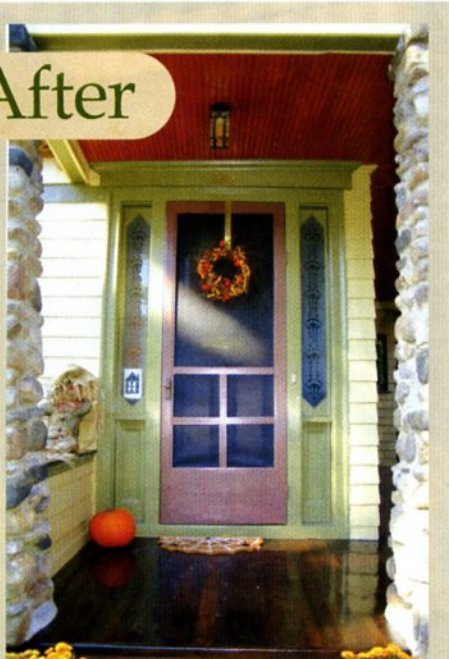
We chose to continue the historical feel of the color scheme by selecting a darker color for the primary trim, including the window trim, fascia and soffits. We favored a lush fern green for the main trim as it has a golden undertone to it that nicely compliments the body color. Additionally, the new trim is only one value step darker than the new body color, which lessens the contrast between the dominant features of the home, and keeps the house feeling much more cohesive.

When it came to selecting colors to accent the details of the home, it was especially important to remember that each story of the home is different. We needed to use paint in a way that would create a semblance of similarity while maintaining their distinctive differences. In this way, we painted the row of shingles just below the frieze on the first and second stories in the main trim color, rather than the body color, creating the illusion of a trim board similar to the one on the third-story bay. This also created a nice border for the frieze upon which we could use a secondary color. A soft, summery yellow presented just the right amount of brightness we were looking for, and also allowed us to then use a soft cinnamon color for the various brackets and appliqué detail. This created the balance and symmetry we were striving for in the color design while subtly highlighting the unique details on each story.

To tie in the roof color and add a layer of complexity to the scheme, we elected to use a rich red-brown for the crown molding of the fascia as well as painted entry doors. We didn't want to use a color that would call too much attention to itself, especially on the fascias; rather, we wanted the paint to help accentuate the shadow line of the crown molding and subtly add depth to the scheme. Using this color on the front screen door, however, added a dramatic punch to the already elegant entryway.

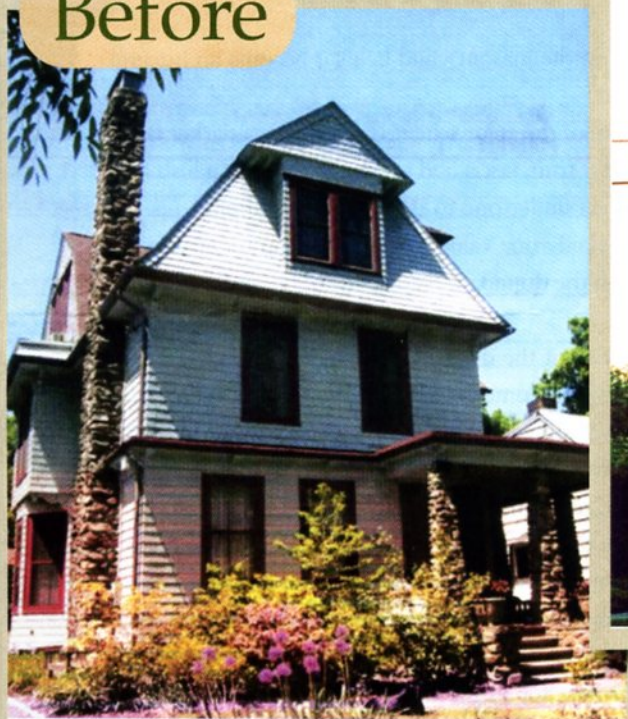
The architectural details that once went unnoticed are now proudly displayed, as are the various antiques and furniture Deb has been collecting over the years. Capitalizing on the hard work of the previous owners, Deb now loves how the house looks and feels on the inside and out. ❧

After



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 Workshop" in the subject line.

Before



After

