

PRODUCT ADVICE

DECORATING PERIOD PROPERTIES



All Farrow & Ball paints are eco friendly with low or minimal VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) content and are water based giving them a low odour and quick drying time which benefits both you and the environment.

When preparing to redecorate older properties, of traditional construction, it's important to find out the condition of each surface and the history of any previous paint applied. Old properties usually require gentle or sympathetic treatments that are compatible with previous coatings that remain.

Interior Walls

Old interior walls are likely to be lime plastered and painted with old style Emulsion paint, Distemper or Limewash. These old style paint coatings may have also been applied over the top of wallpaper or lining paper.

Consider the ventilation and breathability of the room – this is essential in solid structures without wall cavities, where damp is likely to be present. Ensure there is adequate room ventilation in these types of structure to help minimise problems such as Efflorescence and Black Mould.

If possible, use an electronic moisture meter to measure the levels of dampness at the lower, middle and upper parts of the wall at different times of the year (each season), under differing ambient temperatures and humidity levels (a process known as Moisture Profiling).

Where possible aim to determine what type of paint has previously been applied and check the wall condition for signs of flaking, chalking and surface staining. If there is evidence of flaking, this could indicate that several coats have previously been applied and the surface may be inherently unsound. To check for chalking rub surface with a dry cloth.

Decide whether paint removal is the best option or if the surface can be stabilised. Lime renders and plasters are intended to allow water vapour transmission and permeation and must not be sealed.

Farrow & Ball recommend obtaining structural advice from a professional before selecting a suitable coating system for interior walls of traditionally constructed buildings. Our recommended finishes include: Farrow & Ball Estate® Emulsion, Casein Distemper or Limewash.

Ceilings

Lining paper applied directly on top of lime plaster was once a common practice for decorating ceilings in period properties. Suitable products to use in this instance include: Farrow & Ball Estate® Emulsion, Casein Distemper or Soft Distemper.

The lining paper may have localised bubbling in some areas which may be repaired by cross-cutting the paper with a sharp blade and applying border/edging adhesive under the paper by brush, smoothing flat with a damp cloth and ensuring all traces of adhesive are removed from the surface.

If the ceiling has evidence of many previous coats, then consider using Farrow & Ball Soft Distemper as this finish will cause the least stress on the area. Due to its high opacity, a single coat application is normally sufficient.

Delicate cornices and mouldings should ideally be painted with Farrow & Ball Soft Distemper, which can be easily removed by washing and brushing if required at a later date to preserve the fine decorative detail.

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Old woodwork

Special precautions should be taken during surface preparation of pre-1960s paint surfaces as they may contain harmful lead. For further advice contact HSE on 0300 003 1747, email advice@hse.gsi.gov.uk or visit www.hse.gov.uk/lead.

To identify if lead is present, conduct a self check test with a Lead kit, or if the work is a major project, contact an analytical service provider to examine all surfaces.

LEAD PAINT IS TO BE REMOVED BY PROFESSIONALS ONLY.

Examine the condition of the woodwork for areas of cracking, peeling and chalking. Old paint may be hard, discoloured and contaminated with smoke or other household residues which will adversely affect the adhesion of any new paint.

Prepare the area to be painted by rubbing it down with wet waterproof abrasive paper. Wear a dust/vapour mask and ensure good ventilation. Feather off old paint to a smooth edge, continually re-wetting the area as required. Wipe down with a damp cloth and clean all paintwork with a mild detergent solution to ensure that all residues have been fully removed.

Scumble, Varnished or Wax polished coatings

The coating should be removed by initially rubbing down with a cloth soaked in white spirit (to soften the finish) and then using steel wool with white spirit to scrub back to bare wood.

When working with white spirit, always use an appropriate respiratory mask and gloves, and ensure that the area is well ventilated. Working in small areas, use the cloth to work the white spirit into the coating. As the coating softens, use a scraper to lift it off the surface and dispose of the residue safely.

After the surface coating has been fully removed, rub steel wool with white spirit along the grain of the wood to lift the final traces of the old coating from the wood.

Finish by wiping the area with a cloth soaked in a mild detergent solution and allow to completely dry. Once dry, rub down with wet waterproof abrasive paper. Wear a dust/vapour mask and ensure good ventilation during this process.

Staining and other defects

Staining is common in older period properties and a balance has to be struck between sealing/removing the stains and maintaining the breathability of the surface. Smoke, nicotine and soot may be present on both woodwork and walls and washing these areas with a mild detergent solution is essential.

Stains from chimney flues, caused by acidic components and damp can be transmitted through the chimney breast. Stain resisting primers are often non-breathable and should be used with caution. In these circumstances a single coat of Farrow & Ball Masonry & Plaster Stabilising Primer will reduce seepage without adversely affecting breathability.

Unightly stains can be caused by water transmission, due to any iron or soluble components within the sub-structure, for example old dyed wallpaper or ferrous nails/screws location within a damp wall. Here, a single coat of Farrow & Ball Masonry & Plaster Stabilising Primer will help to minimise these types of stains.

Efflorescence

Efflorescence is the soluble salts transmitted from the mortar or plaster within a damp wall or structure, which appear as white crystals on the surface of the substrate. If these salts are sealed in, blisters will form underneath the paint surface. Remove efflorescence by dry brushing the surface and investigate the cause of the dampness.

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Mould and Algae

Mould such as Black Mould (*Aspergillus*) forms internally in damp and poorly ventilated areas such as bathrooms.

Areas of mould can be removed by scrubbing clean using a diluted household bleach solution made of one part bleach and three parts water – this will work to kill the spores.

Ensure the remainder of the surface is thoroughly clean (using a mild detergent) and all dirt and other organic material has been removed. Once dry, a fungicidal treatment can be applied to prevent further mould growth. Always ensure that the area being treated has sufficient ventilation.

Floors

Wax polished floors were once popular in period properties. All traces of wax must be removed prior to painting, by initially rubbing with a cloth soaked in white spirit (to soften the finish) and then using steel wool with white spirit to scrub the floor timbers.

When working with white spirit, always use an appropriate respiratory mask and gloves, and ensure that the area is well ventilated. Working in small areas, use the cloth to work the white spirit into the coating. As the coating softens, use a scraper to lift it off the surface and dispose of the residue safely.

After the surface coating has been fully removed, rub steel wool with white spirit along the grain of the wood to lift any final traces of the old coating from the wood.

Finish by wiping the area with a cloth soaked in a mild detergent solution and allow to completely dry. Once dry, rub down with wet waterproof abrasive paper. Wear a dust/vapour mask and ensure good ventilation during this process.

Any areas of old paint that have peeled or blistered must be removed. For the best finish and longest service life, remove as much of the previous coating as possible before repainting. Ensure the floor is thoroughly clean using an appropriate floor cleaner. Sand to a smooth finish, then vacuum and wipe down with a damp cloth. Allow wood to dry (to less than 10% moisture content, measured using an electronic moisture meter). Then apply one coat of Farrow & Ball Wood Floor Primer & Undercoat to seal, followed by two coats of Farrow and Ball Floor Paint.

Contact us:

For advice on colours, paint finishes or wallpaper our customer services team is on hand to help you, just call +44 (0) 1202 876141, email sales@farrow-ball.com, or write to us at Farrow & Ball, Uddens Estate, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 7NL, UK. Please note that calls may be recorded for training purposes.

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