

MEMO

TO: Glenn Keyes, Glenn Keyes Architects

FROM: Susan L. Buck, Conservator and Paint Analyst

RE: Aiken-Rhett House Exterior Paint Review

DATE: April 25, 2006

I spent one day at the Aiken-Rhett House (April 18, 2006) reviewing the Period III (1858) palette that we have developed to date. Your colored mock-up of the south elevation is a very helpful reference and it also highlighted several areas that remained unresolved:

- I noted that the mock-up shows the brownstone window sills as unpainted, yet as we discussed on-site, it is clear that many protected areas of the sills retain the Period III yellow limewash. Perhaps the brownstone was stained or dirty by the time the building was repainted in Period III, or the brownstone sills were considered less fashionable, so they were painted the yellow limewash body color. The mock-up should show the sills blending in with the yellow body color, but no scoring.



Yellow wash on
sides of sills

- I rechecked the current gray color of the cellar door and solid shutters below the piazza and on the west elevation. On-site research and the evidence in the uncast and cast samples from the south elevation cellar door and two shutters show that the door and the solid shutters should be painted brown, like many of the other woodwork elements.

Target
period
brown
here



Target period
brown paint
found above
hinge

- The mock-up shows that the columns and the panels behind them for the door leading from the second-floor piazza into the second-floor hall as “stone” color (Benjamin Moore #985), but on-site investigations suggested all the wooden elements of the door surround are painted with the brown sand paint. This was confirmed with cross-section paint analysis.

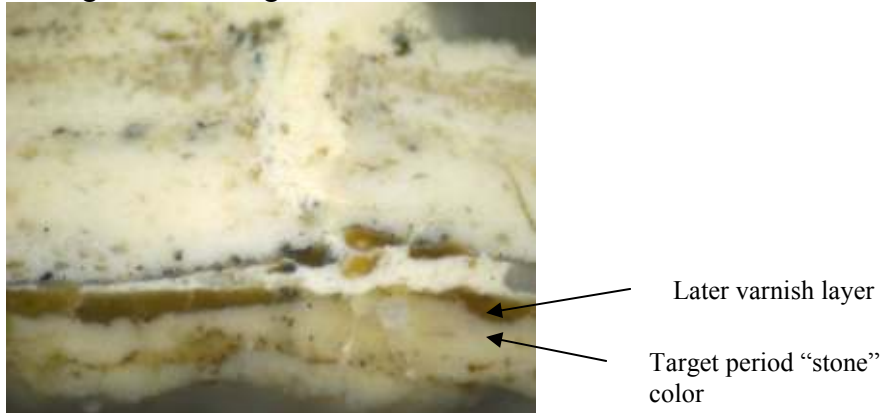


Brown sand paint
on entire door
surround

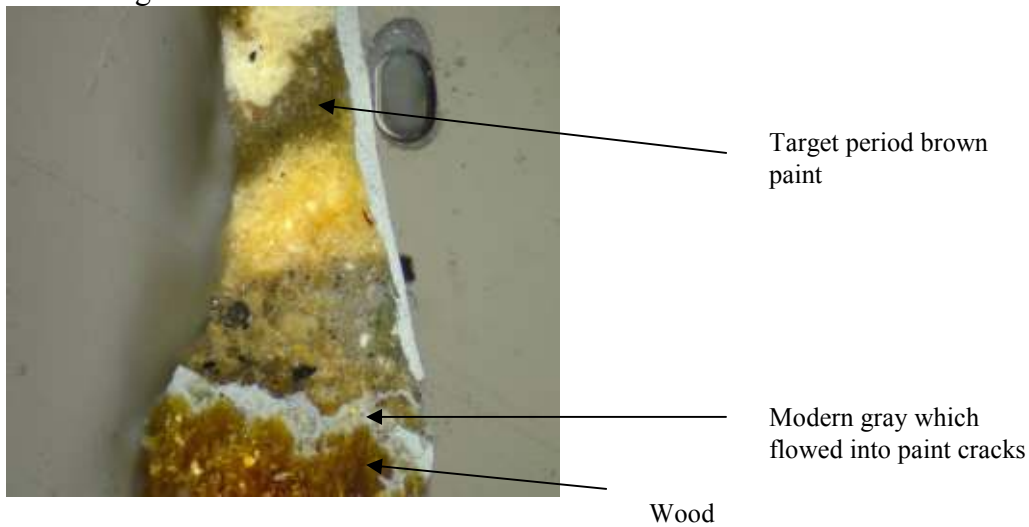
Brown paint on sash

While I was on-site I also sampled a piazza column, a section of early baseboard on the piazza, a second-floor window sash, a decorative ironwork grate, and two door architraves on the north elevation to search for the paints related to Period III. No clearly decipherable paint evidence was found on the north elevation door architraves, although there are tiny remnants of what may be the Period III brown paint color (Benjamin Moore #1021). The best photomicrographs illustrating the target period colors follow. The revised Period III palette is shown in a chart at the end of this memo.

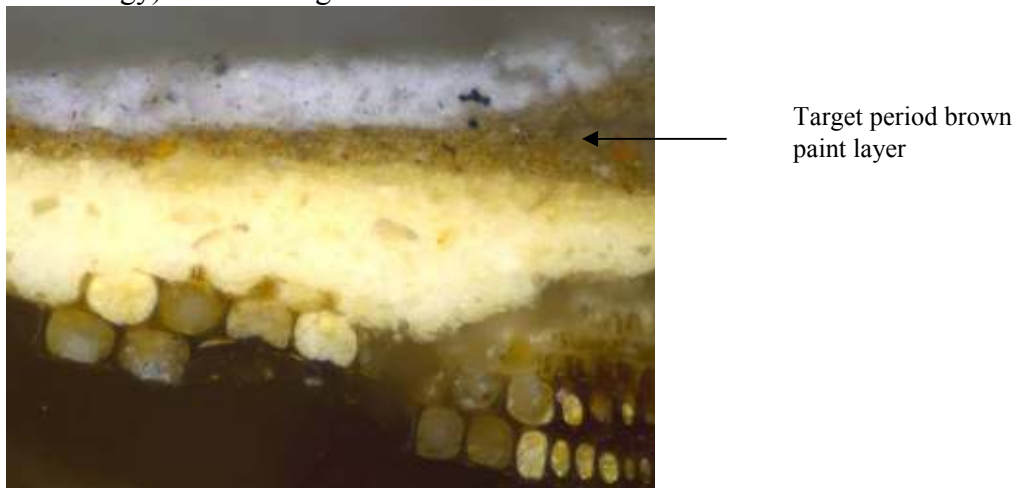
III-1. Capital of fourth column from SE corner, first-floor piazza, middle of ring turnings. Visible Light 200X



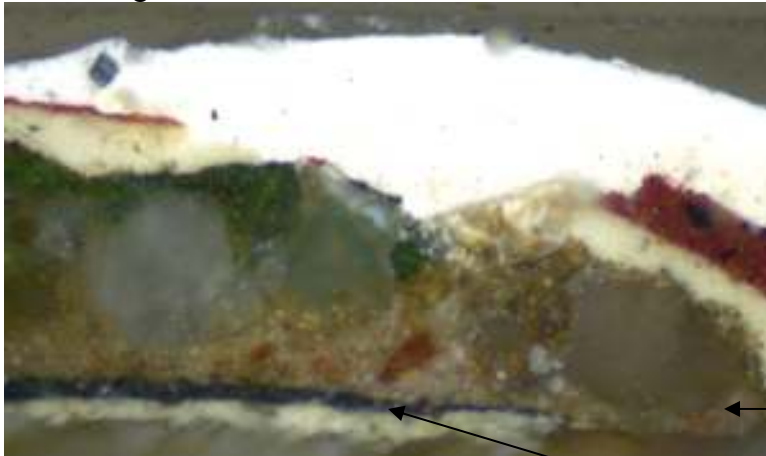
III-3. First-floor piazza, south elevation, baseboard behind east shutter for west window. Visible Light 100X



III-6. South elevation, cellar level below piazza, right stile of door (shutters have same chronology). Visible Light 200X



111-11. South elevation, second-floor piazza, sash for the window west of the door.
Visible Light 100X



Period II black on
off-white primer

Target period brown with
overlap of sand paint (sample
was taken adjacent to window
architrave)

III-12. West elevation, cellar level, above upper hinge on south solid shutter.
Visible Light 200X



Target period brown

Aiken-Rhett House Period III Palette

Location	Period III color	Color Match	Observations
Cornice	Brown sand paint	Benjamin Moore #1021*	Sand mixed into the paint, not blown on
Window sash	“Stone” colored paint	Benjamin Moore #985*	Sample III-5
Window architraves	Brown paint	Benjamin Moore #985*	Moderately glossy
Single shutters	Intense green	Schreuder #104A	Moderately glossy
Stucco and window sills	Yellow limewash	Benjamin Moore #2160-40**	Very matte and thinly applied
Ashlar scoring	Unpigmented limewash	Benjamin Moore “decorator’s white”**	White scoring is not completely opaque
Tripartite shutters/gallery shutters/ground floor shutters	Oak-graining	Base: Pittsburgh Paint #323-7 Glaze: Benjamin Moore #1225* Varnish ?	Should be glossy
Exterior doors	Oak-graining	Base: Pittsburgh Paint #323-7 Glaze: Benjamin Moore #1225* Varnish ?	Should be glossy
Cellar doors and shutters under piazza	Brown paint	Benjamin Moore #1021*	Sample III-6
Cellar shutters on south elevation	Brown paint	Benjamin Moore #1021*	Sample III-12
Tripartite window sash	Brown paint	Benjamin Moore #1021*	Sample III-11, contains some overlap of sand paint from architrave
Tripartite window architrave	Brown sand paint	Benjamin Moore #1021*	Matches cornice paint

Piazza woodwork	“Stone” colored paint	Benjamin Moore #985*	Samples III-1 and III-2
Piazza baseboard	Brown paint	Benjamin Moore #1021	Sample III-3
Iron bars	Green	Schreuder 104A	No early paint evidence survives in sample III-8

* Old Benjamin Moore color system.

** New Benjamin Moore Color Preview Collection

Aiken-Rhett House
Charleston, South Carolina

Sample Locations – Samples Removed April 18, 2006 by Susan L. Buck

Phase III – Exterior Paint Analysis Project
Review of Period III (1858) Target Paint Colors

III-1. Capital of fourth column from SE corner, first-floor piazza, middle of ring turnings. *Target period “stone” color.*

III-2. Capital of fourth column from SE corner, first-floor piazza, below lower bead molding. *Target period “stone” color.*

III-3. First-floor piazza, south elevation, baseboard behind east shutter for west window. *Target period brown paint.*

III-4. Second-floor piazza, back of column to the west of the central door. *Target period brown sand paint.*

III-5. Second-floor piazza, window west of door, west side of sash. *Target period “stone” color.*

III-6. South elevation, cellar level below piazza, right stile of door (shutters have same chronology). *Target period brown paint.*

III-7. North elevation, doorway below stairs to rear yard, right architrave at bead molding. *Very degraded, but may be brown in Period III.*

III-8. North elevation, door to rear passage and servants’ hall. Right architrave at interstices of inner bead molding. *Very degraded, but may be brown in Period III.*

III-9. South elevation, Withdrawing Room wing, decorative iron grate in corner. *No early evidence survives.*

111-10. South elevation, second floor, architrave behind west column for central door. *Target period brown sand paint.*

111-11. South elevation, second-floor piazza, sash for the tripartite window west of the door. *Target period brown paint.*

III-12. West elevation, cellar level, above upper hinge on south solid shutter. *Target period brown paint.*