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exterior makeovers

before and after

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THE NEW PORCH, restored cupola, cedar siding, and five-color paint scheme revitalized the 1870 Italianate house in Tenafly.

SOURCES: renovation, Van-Go General Contracting in Englewood; color consultant, Rob Schweitzer in Ann Arbor, Michigan.



Photos by homeowner

color scheming BY MARY VINNEDGE

The five-color paint combination on this 1870 Italianate house in Tenafly is the icing on the cake for its exterior makeover. Owners Michael and Karen Neus used a color consultant to select the striking hues that concluded the

renovation by Van-Go General Contracting, an Englewood-based company that specializes in restoring the original character to vintage homes.

As originally conceived, Van-Go removed cement-coated asbestos shingles, installed cedar siding, and restored and rebuilt portions of the cupola. With work under way, the Neuses also decided to tear away the 1920s-era Craftsman-style porch and replace it. An architect suggested the design for the new porch, which has a style attuned to the home's Victorian origin.

Finally, the homeowners wanted a distinctive, period-style paint scheme. Their Internet search on the phrase "historic paint colors" turned up color consultant Rob Schweitzer, who would help the couple select — via e-mail — the five ideal hues for their taste and their home. "We also found at least two other color consultants that way, but Schweitzer's Web site [www.arts-crafts.com/market/robs/historic.html] was by far the most impressive," Karen Neus said. The cost, about \$400, was easy to justify because "we could spend that much money buying the wrong paint," she said.

There were questions along the way, and Schweitzer was always quick to respond from his office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "Every time the painters — or us or the contractor — would doubt his choice of detail colors, we'd paint a test area and chuckle, because Schweitzer was always right," Karen Neus said.