**Victorian colors resurface**

By Republican American -September 6, 2015

SOUTHBURY – The Old Town Hall building on South Britain Road is a landmark, and though it may seem like it, it wasn’t always white.

A study of paint samples scraped from its chipping facade shows the Victorian structure was originally a soft beige with dark green, deep red and dark brown trim.

“This old Town Hall has an original colorful past, suggestive of the optimism and up-to-the minute stylishness,” Sara B. Chase, a preservation consultant, wrote in a report.

Built in 1873, the building was used for town offices until 1963. It has since become a museum for exhibits on Southbury’s history. A new exterior paint job will soon return it to the look of its youth.

Chase in her report said during the 1950s and ’60s, white was felt to be a real New England color for churches and other public buildings. “Within the past 20 years, however, the Victorian palette has been rediscovered and has become popular.”

A $112,000 state preservation grant with a $112,000 town match will be used to replace the roofs at South Britain Library and Old Town Hall Museum and to repaint the museum.

Paul Lasewicz, chairman of the Historic Buildings Commission, said, “these historic structures are unique to Southbury, true town assets. Thanks to the great work of commission member Jay Carow and Carol S. Hubert in the town offices in obtaining the state preservation grant, we can address a decade’s work of maintenance needs.”

Town Historian John Dwyer was also involved in the process.

Scholar Painting of Seymour won the bid to paint the building.

First Selectman Ed Edelson gave an update on the project during his report at Thursday’s selectmen’s meeting, with an overhead presentation showing the new colors.

“The painting should start before the end of the month,” Edelson said.

During his presentation, Edelson joked that he didn’t want people to see the painting going on while driving by and have a heart attack.

Chase examined an old photograph and used extension ladders to scrape for paint samples that were studied under a microscope to find the building’s original colors in her study from 1999 to 2000.

Melinda Elliot, a member of the Historic Buildings Commission, said Chase analyzed eight layers of paint in some sections.

Chase then worked closely with paint supplier Sherwin Williams to match the colors from the paint to its “Preservation Palette” and found that it matched up well.

The clapboards will be Renwick Beige. The comer boards, door and window frames, outermost raking gable and eave molding will be Rookwood Shutter Green and the small front pediment inner molding and small paired brackets on the front door pediment will be Rookwood Red, according to Chase’s description.

“It’s exciting that after many decades of wearing white, the Old Town Hall will once again show off the vibrant colors of her Victorian youth,” Lasewicz said.

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