

Nyack turns over a new leaf for fall with a downtown beautification project

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Michael Spilotras of Spilotras Paintings on Nyack's Main Street. His company helped repaint many of the buildings between Main Street between Broadway.

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A well rounded color palette was used with blues, pops of red, and some neutrals, says Andrea Magno, a color specialist for Benjamin Moore. / Carucha L. Meuse / The Journal News

Nyack has had a make-over.



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The village is one of 20 winners of the Benjamin Moore "Main Street Matters" contest. The prize? A strip of Main Street storefronts, between North Broadway and Cedar Street, got a fresh coat of paint, and in some cases minor repairs, including replacing broken window panes and rotted wood.

Nyack was one of over 100 towns chosen by Benjamin Moore to compete in its online competition. Nyackers came out in force to ensure a victory.

Nyack Mayor Jen Laird White created her own YouTube video extolling Nyack's many virtues. Joe Montrey of Herb Lack Paints & Hardware set up a computer at his shop on Main Street so that customers could vote for Nyack on-site.

The winners were announced in July; crews from Spilotras Painting in nearby Chestnut Ridge began their work in Nyack in mid-September, clad in cheerful red "Main Street Matters" T-shirts. A town celebration on Oct. 6 marked the project's conclusion.

"I love Nyack — I think it's beautiful, beautiful, beautiful," says White. "I think what's nice about it is it has this sort of gorgeous consistent architecture in the downtown, but I also think that when the Benjamin Moore people looked at it they could see that a little love and

care would create a dramatic improvement.”

Let’s just say while it is an improvement, the change isn’t all that dramatic. Most of the buildings retain their original color schemes, with the bulk of the changes coming in trim and accent colors — the Benjamin Moore team also replaced broke glass and repaired wood in some cases — but the entire effect is a clean, freshened look for this part of downtown.

Color selections were made by Benjamin Moore’s color team. Andrea Magno, a color & design expert for Benjamin Moore who worked on the project, says that while they did develop an overall palette for the town, the specific colors were really informed by the unique charms of individual buildings.

“Brick, awnings, signage, the colors on buildings around it — we knew the color flow for the entire block, offered suggestions, and worked with what was existing, picking up cues from what people have already,” says Magno of the process.

Two of the specific inspirations Magno cites were the paintings of Nyack native Edward Hopper and the Hudson River. “We wanted to express the history and personality of the town through color.”

“It’s a pretty well rounded palette,” says Magno of the colors chosen. “There are blues, pops of red, stain, some neutrals... the entire collection of 3,500 colors was really fair game.”

Heritage Red, edged in rich gold leaf, has made the decorative panels of the landmark “F.W. Woolworth Way” building really pop, and creates a more cohesive look with the existing red-and-gold signage above. The building’s woodwork has been repaired, sanded, stripped and varnished.

“I think the Woolworth’s Building was the most specific physical impact,” says White. A replacement for one of the damaged antique lights on the Woolworth Building’s facade was tracked down to help make the restoration complete.

Johnny Apollo Gallery, Alain’s Wine & Tapas, and Optical Shop of Nyack have retained their chic black, fitting with these businesses’ sophisticated personalities. The storefronts also received some new woodwork to replace a slightly damaged facade. Johnny Apollo Gallery owner John Bouzakis has made the most of the space’s facelift by adding a beautiful new sign above his gallery, perfectly set off by the rich black paint job.

“It looks so nice and clean; it looks good,” says Bouzakis of Main Street’s makeover. “The town is looking great, how can I complain — especially for free!”

The Trachtenberg Building on the corner of Main and Broadway has always been a bit of an anomaly — many of the formerly large shop windows were long ago blocked in garage-door style, rendering the first story an incongruous beige stucco slab beneath the arched Palladian windows, decorative brickwork, and ornamental cornices of the second story — but the building’s look has now been softened with color. Appropriately named Hudson Bay

blue along the bottom few feet of the building creates an attractive visual separation from the clean, bright Manchester Tan up top, producing a wainscoting effect.

“It really makes the building pop!” says Dr. Lloyd C. Kranes, a dentist whose practice is in the building — and whose office happened to already feature a very similar two-tone color scheme inside. “I think the whole street looks terrific — definitely an upgrade.”

While it is not on Main Street, The Nyack Center — home to many of Nyack’s community programs — has also been granted a generous facelift free of charge by Spilotras Painting. The facade of the 174-year-old former church has been power-washed and freshly painted white. The door is framed in soft Winter Wheat.

“Benjamin Moore wasn’t just going to come into town and slap a coat of paint on it and leave; they wanted to do it right,” says Michael Spilotras. Wood facades damaged in Superstorm Sandy were replaced, as was cracked glass at two storefronts. All surfaces were properly repaired and primed prior to painting. The benches and trellis at Veterans Park have been stained, and the park’s columns and lightposts have been freshly painted. All the town’s sidewalks have been power-washed.

“The people of Nyack have been great to work with, everyone’s so excited about the makeover, and Mayor White has been great, giving us all the support we needed,” says Spilotras. “Such a great team effort to get it done the right way, it really makes for a dramatic before and after.”

Spilotras’ workers have managed to be an unobtrusive presence in Nyack throughout the project, allowing business as usual for pedestrians and tenants. Benjamin Moore and Spilotras have also offered discounts to those businesses not a part of the strip benefiting from the contest.

“We have all these wonderful business owners and our downtown has been working so hard to stay afloat during these traumatic times,” says Mayor White. “I think this is a real boost — it’s a physical boost for the areas getting painted, but it’s also a potential economic boost for everyone around. Hopefully it’s not only going to give it a physical improvement but a mental improvement, a foot traffic improvement, the kind of PR we could never afford to buy for ourselves.”