

# 5 Things to Know about Downtown Buildings

Texas Main Street Program

## **Rule #1 Repair before Replace. Everything, always.**

- Buildings aren't built the way your downtown buildings were. Historic buildings are unique because of the construction methods and craftsmanship that went into building them. Repairing saves the unique character.
- Regular maintenance can prolong the life of a building and reduce the expense of rehabilitation.
- Repairing materials keeps waste out of landfills.

## **Rule #2 Brick is durable, but not invincible.**

- Don't paint it. Sealing brick in any way can trap water in the wall.
- Don't sandblast it. Pressure washing is acceptable at a low pressure.
- Don't use hard mortar. Contemporary mortar is too strong for soft, old brick. Use a mortar mixture that matches the original during repointing.

## **Rule #3 Water is the enemy.**

- Uncontrolled moisture is the most common source of deterioration in historic buildings.
- Inspect buildings regularly for signs of leaks, trapped water, etc.

## **Rule #4 Most properties change over time. Work with what you have.**

- Respect the different eras of a building.
- Identify unique materials, signs, and features that should be preserved.
- Don't make unnecessary, costly changes.

## **Rule #5 When in doubt, ask for help.**

- Consult Texas Main Street Design Staff.
- Consult local or regional professionals such as: architects, engineers, conservators, craftspeople, etc.
- Review National Park Service Preservation Briefs and other technical preservation guidance documents.

