

2.1 Main Street Historic District



2.1.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF MAIN STREET

Grapevine, Texas, was established in the 1840s as a rural farming community. Its township was platted by 1854 and it developed as a regional agricultural center for a number of smaller, surrounding communities. The inhabitants of these smaller communities as well as those in Grapevine proper, shared a cohesive identity and culture. This culture was largely responsible for the establishment of the town and influenced its development through time.

The early commercial buildings in downtown Grapevine were constructed along Main Street, and were frame construction. These early buildings were replaced with brick, one and two-story buildings constructed in the late 19th and first two decades of the 20th century. These

simple, brick commercial structures are typically three bays wide. Most are simply detailed with brick cornices that include sign bands framed by brick piers; many contain cast-iron storefronts.



TYPICAL TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY
COMMERCIAL BUILDING

At the turn of the century, two local businessmen, Dick Wall and Zeb Jenkins, joined four others in establishing a flour mill south of Main Street's business district. The pursuit of this venture at the south end of town, near the railroad tracks, accompanied the commercial development of Grapevine's Main Street as it continued northward, displacing the few remaining houses on the street. This new growth was assisted by the town's incorporation in 1907, a move that was strongly supported by its business community and supported continued commercial growth.

The Great Depression exerted a tremendous impact on the town, its inhabitants and local farmers. Although the collapse of the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929 is generally recognized as the onset of the Great Depression, in Grapevine the failure of Farmers National Bank in 1927 spawned economic troubles in the community. Little is known about the details of the bank failure, as neither this failure nor the stock market crash received coverage in the *Grapevine Sun*.

The outbreak of World War II late in 1941 brought about the advent of a war industry in the Fort Worth region. The sudden influx of workers to the region during this decade created unprecedented growth in Grapevine's population. As a result, the town incurred a massive building boom, and it began a transition from a relatively independent agricultural community to a suburban one with a need for commercial businesses, many of which were located on Main Street.

The last major building boom during the historic period occurred during the 1940s. A Works Progress Administration (WPA) grant of \$101,000, matched with local bond funds, provided for the construction of a new high school in 1940.

At this time, several developments occurred on Main Street which contributed to its' presence as the heart of Grapevine's commercial life. The facades of the E.L. Jordan Building and Willhoite Garage on Main Street were renovated in the same year, and the New Place Theater and the First National Bank buildings were erected on Main Street in 1940 and 1942, respectively.



PALACE THEATRE in FARMERS NATIONAL BANK BUILDING (circa 1930's)

Grapevine's limited commercial developments following World War II represents its vernacular interpretations of modernism. The First National Bank was completed in March 1942 on the former site of the old Palace Theater and Earl Yates Dry Goods. It was also described as a modernistic structure, built of Leuders limestone with an entrance of Minnesota Ruby Red Granite.



PALACE THEATRE c. 1940

Constructed as the last additions to Main Street during the historic period, these buildings represent both stylistic interpretations and building techniques associated with the late 1930s, as Art Moderne (or Art Deco) commercial edifices supplanted the brick one or two part commercial buildings built earlier in the century.

The fine, ornamental brickwork on the street facades of the district buildings typically features unpainted red brick with ornamental parapets. The corbelled and dentilled courses in these parapets create a uniformity that ties the blockface together visually. Rear facades of the district's buildings are more utilitarian. These are also of brick, have varied setbacks, irregular fenestration patterns and most have been significantly altered and rebuilt.



**ORNATE BRICKWORK AT
BUILDING PARAPET**

As is common in commercial buildings of the period, most interiors of historic buildings have had varying degrees of alteration over the years.

2.1.2 READING YOUR BUILDING

Property owners planning to make exterior changes to a historic building should start by identifying the features and materials that give their structure its unique character, as well as its historic and non-historic elements. By taking the time to recognize and understand significant features, you will be much more likely to plan a project that is compatible with the original style of the building.

If, after looking over these guidelines, you would still like more information, the staff at the City of Grapevine will be happy to arrange a pre-application meeting. Staff can provide additional advice on the character of your building and how it relates to your planned project.

Learning to read a building and identify its significant elements is not complicated. Begin by thinking about and answering the questions below.

Step One: Identify the overall visual aspects of a building. Do not focus on the details, but on the setting and architectural context. Begin by working through the checklist below.

Shape: What is there about the form or shape of the building that gives the building its identity? Is it short and squat, or tall and narrow?

Roof and roof features: How does the roof shape or pitch contribute to the building's character? Are there unique features like weathervanes, cresting or cupolas?

Openings: What rhythm or pattern does the arrangements of window or door openings create? Are there unusually-shaped window openings or distinctive entryways?

Projections: Are there parts of the building that are character-defining because they project from the walls of the building like porches, cornices, bay windows, or balconies? Are there turrets, or widely overhanging eaves, projecting pediments, or chimneys?

Trim and Secondary Features: How does the window and door trim contribute to the character of the building? Be sure to consider the decoration, color, or patterning of the trim. What about secondary features like shutters, decorative gables and railing?

Materials: From a distance, what contribution do the color, texture, and combination of exterior materials make to the overall character of the building?

Setting: What aspects of the setting are important in establishing the visual character of the site? Think about the building's setback, alignment with adjacent buildings, plantings, fencing, terracing, and outbuildings, and its relationships to the street and alley.

Step Two: Identify the character of the building at close range. Assess the color and texture of the building materials as they convey the

craftsmanship and age that give the building its unique appearance. Begin by working through the checklist below.

Materials at Close Inspection: Are there one or more materials that have an inherent texture that contribute to the close-range character, such as stucco, exposed aggregate, concrete, or brick textured with vertical grooves?

Craft Details: Is there high-quality brickwork with narrow mortar joints, or hand-tooled or patterned stonework? Are there hand-split or hand dressed clapboards or machine-smoothed beveled siding? Are the windows or doors unique? Craft details, whether handmade or machine-made, contribute to the character of a building because they are manifestations of the time in which the work was done and of the tools and processes that were used.

2.1.3 CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Character defining features means those architectural materials and features of a building that define the historic nature or character of the building. Such elements may include the form of the building, exterior cladding, roof materials, door and window design, exterior features such as canopies and porches, exterior and interior trim, etc.

Examples of character-defining features are:

Site:

- The building exhibits a grid pattern of streets with a secondary circulation system of alleys;
- Possesses historic curbing and paving materials of stone or wood.
- Has consistent topography;
- Has consistent lot sizes, and setbacks at the property line; and
- Is enhanced by mature plantings and street trees.

Brick:

- Is used in a range of building styles from all eras ranging from vernacular commercial to Art Deco;
- Is occasionally in combination with carved limestone or plaster; and
- Enhances architectural character through its color, texture, dimensionality, and bonding patterns.

Wood:

- Articulates stylistic features in storefronts, window and door trim, and decorative trim;
- Articulates stylistic features in cornices, eaves, porch elements, and decorative trim;
- Has remained relatively free from the application of synthetic siding.



WOOD SIDING

Storefronts:

- Have a tripartite organization of bulkheads, plate-glass windows, and transoms;
- Are generally unified under a decorative cornice or brick parapet, sometimes with a signboard or awing; and
- Help maintain a pedestrian-scaled streetscape.



WOOD STOREFRONT AT CAST IRON FAÇADE

Windows:

- Are generally double-hung;
- Have one-over-one glazing patterns or a decorative upper sash; and
- Often possess additional ornament when used in upper-story windows

Doors:

- Are usually sheltered by front porches, building recesses or canopies;
- Include both single and double doors, and use a wide range of glazing patterns to convey a building's architectural character; and
- Are often accompanied by sidelights and transoms.

Roofs:

- Are typically flat, sloping to the rear façade; and
- Employs various sheathing materials, color, and types of ornament to add visual distraction.

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Applied Ornament:

- Distinguishes a variety of façade elements – storefronts, walls and cornices;
- Uses features such as steel tie rods (w/ eschuteon), delicate rosettes or brackets to add dynamism; and
- Embraces a variety of materials including cast stone and cast or natural stone.



ARTICULATED LOWER CORNICE AND CANOPY AT FAÇADE

Cornices:

- Gives closure to the upper portion of a commercial façade; and
- Establishes relationships among buildings on a given block; and
- Provides an area for a decorative statement; and
- Is typically of brick articulation on Main Street.

Rear Facades:

- Front onto alleys, the district's secondary circulatory network;
- Have little or no ornamentation; and
- Often include secondary entrances and windows.

Alleys:

- Represent an important historic feature of the district's transportation network; and
- Provide a primary means of commercial access for those with rear parking.

Refer to 'Design Guidelines' (Part 4) and 'Technical Guidelines' (Part 5) for additional information.

2.1.4 PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES

The authenticity of Grapevine's Main Street and its buildings sets the community apart from our neighbors. Grapevine's unique quality of life will be protected with thoughtful rehabilitation and restoration of our historic resources on Main Street.

As described in the *Introduction and General Information* chapter of these Guidelines, allowing each existing property in the Main Street Historic District to authentically tell the story of its own period in time, while reinforcing the historical period of significance (c. 1870 to 1930) with infill construction, is the goal of the historic district designations. The preservation and conservation of original architectural features is preferred, rather than “modernization” or “updating” of older properties, or imposing a false “historical look” on newer properties.

A number of guiding preservation principles modeled after the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation* are outlined below. Reading through these principles will help you begin to think about how you can carry out your upcoming project in a way that both enhances your historic building or site and preserves its character-defining features.

Relationships: When evaluating the appropriateness of a given project, the structure, the site and the relationship to the rest of the Main Street district should be given careful consideration.

Use: Historic structures within the Main Street preservation district should be used for their originally intended purpose or for an alternate purpose that requires minimal alteration to the building or site.

Historic Character: the historic character of existing buildings and the Main Street historic district can be best preserved by the repair of original materials rather than replacement. Repair and restoration is often more cost effective than replacement, conserves energy and reduces the amount of trash added to landfills. Removal or alternation of historic fabric compromises the original character of a building or site and should be avoided.

Alterations: Repair is always preferred over replacement. When replacement is necessary, materials should replicate or match the visual appearance of the original.

A high level of craftsmanship distinguishes structures within local preservation districts. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques should be preserved whenever possible.

Properties, however, do change over time. Those alternations that have become historic in their own right should be maintained as a record of a resource’s physical evolution.

New Construction and Addition: Additions should be designed to minimize impact to historic fabric and should be compatible with the main structure in massing, size and scale.

New, infill construction should reflect the character of the district during its historic period of significance (1870 – 1930), and should be designed so that it is compatible with its neighbors in size, massing, scale, setback, façade organization, and roof form. New construction may also draw upon established stylistic elements within the district to create a sympathetic design but one that is clearly of its own era.



**RESTORED PALACE THEATRE
w/ ADDITION**

False Historicism: Additions that use new or salvaged material to create a conjectural or falsely historic appearance are inappropriate. Only when a previously demolished Grapevine building can be accurately replicated may a reproduction be considered.



RECONSTRUCTION OF A HISTORIC BUILDING

Treatments: Chemicals and physical treatments should always be as gentle as possible, since harsh methods (like sandblasting) can irreversibly damage historic fabric.

Archeology: Historic sites often contain archeological resources, which should be protected and preserved whenever possible. If artifacts are found, contact the Historic Landmarks Commission for assessment.

2.1.5 MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

