When visiting many of the Main Street communities the most frequently asked question by building owners is “What color should I paint my building?” For those brick and stone buildings that have not been painted or have less than 50% painted, the answer is easy. DO NOT PAINT! Remove the paint that is there, then give your entire building a good washing. The results will surprise you when all the years of dirt and smog that have collected are removed. But, if your building is already painted and the paint will not come off without further deteriorating the brick, you now have paint color options for stone, brick, wood and metal trim.

Inside are the Oklahoma Main Street Colors that were compiled in communities throughout the different regions of the state. Some of the colors were copied from bricks and stones or original paints that are found on the historic downtown buildings while other colors were taken from native plants and rock outcroppings.

**How to Use**

When using the Oklahoma Main Street Colors to paint the façade of your building always remember to use a color that is appropriate. Use the colors inside to find a color that matches your brick by scraping off the paint to the original façade. If your brick color is unable to be seen through the layers of paint, look at the surrounding buildings. If the buildings are a dark or light red, brown, or yellow then use the same color tone or hue. Do not put a yellow brick building in the middle of the block if none of the buildings on your block or in your downtown are yellow. The color samples found inside are grouped in families across the card. Consider which vertical row(s) best compliment the original color of your masonry and/or work the best with the adjacent buildings.

The trim of the building is the material around the windows, doors, or cornice area. To paint these areas use a color that accents the color of your building. At the bottom of each row is an accent color to use if you decide to paint your building any of the colors above it. Or you can use the colors stated for only trim use. The secret is to use a darker trim on a light building and lighter trim on a dark building. For buildings with metal trim, paint them a more neutral color or choose darker, bronze colored, anodized frames.

**Painting Your Building**

After you choose a color and paint for your building and/or trim there are a few things that need to be completed first. Most important is to prepare the surface by removing all loose paint. Preferably use a wire brush or a scraper. Next, see that all of the surfaces are in good condition. Does the mortar need repointing? Is the wood rotten? Are the windows sealed? After completing these few things you are ready to begin with the primer. Since paint adheres to many materials differently it is important to choose the right type of paint for your project. For wood it is best to use an oil base paint for the primer and either oil or latex for the top coat. For brick buildings you can use an oil or latex based paint for the primer and the top coat. For the shine of the paint you should use a flat or matte finish on a brick building and either gloss, semigloss, or flat for the trim depending on your preference.

Once you have selected your new colors, this card can be used for computer matching at any local paint supplier.

**Cleaning Your Building**

If your building has never been painted but the color looks drab or it has been painted but is falling off, maybe it is time for a face-lift. Cleaning your building is not only going to help with its appearance but also with slowing down any deterioration. If you clean your building the wrong way though, you can cause more deterioration.
There are many different methods available to clean your building. Keep in mind the amount and type of soil or paint to be removed and the type and condition of the masonry. If your building has loose paint or is slightly dirty it would be best to clean it with some water, a bristle brush (not metal) and detergent. Make sure your water and detergent do not leave a stain or further deteriorate your building. If your building has thick paint or is covered in a thick layer of dirt a chemical remover might be best. You can either do it by a chemical wash or by a chemical paper produced by Dumond Chemicals and ProSoCo. Make sure that the chemical cleaners are appropriate for your building material. Another common type of cleaning is abrasive blasting. Water blasting, sodablasting, and sandblasting are techniques that should never be used to clean masonry surfaces. This damages and erodes the brick and mortar joints.

Once you have chosen the way you are going to clean your building there are some things still to do before you begin. It is highly recommended that you do a test patch to evaluate the effectiveness of the cleaning method and to see how it affects the brick. If the brick face rubs off when you touch it or is any way damaged, the bricks or mortar might be too soft to clean. If soap and water did not clean paint off the bricks try another test patch of a chemical cleaner; if this does not work the building might need to be repainted instead. It is possible that your mortar needs to be repointed but first ask a professional whether it is best to do this before or after you clean the masonry. Before cleaning the remainder of the building, make sure that windows and doors are protected against water and chemical seepage.

### Oklahoma Main Street: Styles, Masonry, and Colors

**Victorian or Territorial** (c. 1889-1907)
- **Masonry type**: brick, sandstone, Kansas limestone
- **Other**: wood window and door framing, stamped metalwork in tin and zinc
- **Colors**: brick- red orange tones
  - sandstone
  - pressed metal- natural colors, white

**Classical Revival** (c. 1910-1930)
- **Masonry type**: brick, limestone, cast stone, terra cotta
- **Colors**: brick- red, orange, yellows and golds, browns and beiges
  - limestone
  - cast stone
  - terra cotta

**Plains Commercial** (c. 1910-1940)
- **Masonry type**: brick, cast stone
- **Other**: glazed tile, wood window and door framing, copper framed display windows
- **Colors**: brick- natural red brick
  - cast stone
  - tile- red, blue, green, yellow, black
  - copper

**Mission Style or Spanish Revival** (c. 1910-1940)
- **Masonry type**: brick, concrete decoration, flat textured stucco
- **Other**: glazed tile
- **Colors**: brick- various tones and colors
  - stucco
  - tile- bright colors similar to Plains Commercial

**Art Deco or Art Moderne** (c. 1930-1950)
- **Masonry type**: brick with cast stone details, stucco, terra cotta
- **Other**: carrera glass, tile, aluminum door and window trims
- **Colors**: brick- crème, buff, black
  - stucco
  - terra cotta
  - carrera glass & tile- bright colors
  - aluminum- silver

**Early Skyscrapers** (c. 1915-1930)
- **Masonry type**: brick, cast stone, limestone, terra cotta
- **Colors**: brick
  - cast stone
  - limestone
  - terra cotta
Oklahoma Main Street Colors

Color Palette

Produced in cooperation with the Oklahoma Main Street Center

THESE SAMPLES APPROXIMATE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE ACTUAL PAINT COLORS.