



*Built To Last*

## Masonry Ordinance Case Study

### BURLESON, TEXAS

Burleson, Texas is a growing suburb nestled 14 miles south of Fort Worth and 41 miles southwest of Dallas. Founded in 1881, the town's motto is *A City with Character*. In 2004, the city adopted a new masonry ordinance to continue quality construction that is built to last as demonstrated in its "Old Town" section, which is located in the heart of the city and features many 100-year-old brick buildings.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

As Burleson, Texas experienced tremendous residential and business development, its city planners formulated a strategy to accommodate sustainable development. In doing so, the city sought to promote development and mandate the construction of new buildings with brick and other masonry materials. They also understood the tremendous added benefit of an expanded tax base as masonry buildings and homes appraise at higher values than like non-masonry structures. Oftentimes this scenario allows a city to actually lower its effective tax rate.

#### JUST THE FACTS:

- City: Burleson, Texas
- Population: 30,000
- Type of Government: Mayor and City Council
- Founded: 1881
- Allison J.H. Thompson, CEcD, Economic Development Director; 817.447.5400 ext. 215; athompson@burlesontx.com
- Website: <http://www.burlesontx.com>

#### MASONRY REQUIREMENTS:

- Minimum 90% of exterior walls on residential buildings
- Minimum 75% of exterior walls on commercial buildings

In recent years, Burleson has experienced explosive growth. The population was only 20,976 in 2000, and now numbers well over 30,000. In recent years, many residents of Dallas and Fort Worth have moved to Burleson to enjoy its charm and easy commute to the major metropolitan areas.

But ironically, the people moving to Burleson to enjoy its charm were spurring the growth of buildings devoid of charm. Most notably, when developments were planned in the "Old Town" section, city leaders decided to develop a masonry ordinance to specify how they wanted their city to look — for many years to come — and still grow.

The Burleson Masonry Ordinance was first adopted in 2004, and was refined, readopted, and expanded citywide in 2006. With some exceptions, the ordinance calls for at least 90 percent of exterior walls on all primary residential buildings to be constructed of masonry materials. In non-residential zoning districts, the ordinance calls for at least 75 percent of exterior walls to be constructed of masonry materials. The changes in 2006 opened the door to allow more flexible features on brick homes, such as dormers and other elements, and to encourage even more creativity and quality when using brick products.



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*-Allison Thompson  
Economic Development Director of Burleson*





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In addition to having quality homes that possess lasting beauty, brick ordinances also attract quality and specialty retail. A major development now underway called Burleson Commons will reflect the masonry ordinance, when it is complete in 2007. The shopping destination will cover 32 acres and be comprised of several retail strip centers and a 12-screen, 42,000 sq.ft. movie theater.

Thompson says the new ordinance has been good for the city, because it is allowing the city to direct quality growth.

"Zoning and design guidelines are tools we can use to help bring quality development to the city and to create sustainable development. In a commercial development, the sustainability of the building is better if it's a masonry product," says Thompson.

Like other members of her community, Thompson can already see positive results from the new ordinance, as new projects using masonry seem to inspire additional quality projects. "We've definitely seen an improvement in the quality of the buildings. Brick, stone, and rock have definitely not inhibited development. It has increased the quality. Others wanting to do quality developments are more likely to come in and to do a project because they know what is going in next to them is going to be quality too," says Thompson. ■

## ADDED BENEFITS

### BRICK SIMPLY WON'T BURN



The 2005-2006 drought made most of Texas a kinder box. Some communities saw their worst fears come true as fires devastated homes, farms, and commercial buildings.

On January 17, 2006 a 40-acre grass fire threatened homes in Joshua, Texas. Homeowners used water hoses in an effort to keep flames from engulfing their homes and possessions. The amazing thing is that even though yards were completely charred and storage sheds and fences burned to the ground, the all-brick homes were spared. The primary ingredient in brick is clay, which is fired to around 2000° F. This process makes brick a non-combustible material and an excellent cladding choice for resistance to fires.

Masonry ordinances that require masonry materials can help raise a community's fire rating and lower insurance rates for the city and its residents. The fire resistance of brick was proven during the January 17th Joshua, Texas fire.

### BRICK RESISTS WIND DAMAGE



Coming off the worst and most devastating hurricane season on record, city officials are scrambling to find ways to make their communities safer. In Texas, springtime tornados can be spawned at anytime, putting lives and property in the line of destruction.

Texas Tech University conducted tests to determine the safety of cladding surfaces when they're up against the natural strength and devastation of tornados. The tests used a wooden 2x4 projectile at a relatively slow speed of 34 mph. Results showed that the missile bounced off the brick veneer, but penetrated to the interior of all other materials tested, including wood siding and fiber cement.

**For more information on how your community can increase its tax base, increase fire and wind safety, and attract quality residential and commercial development, call the Southwestern Brick Institute at 800-733-1813 or go to [www.MasonryOrdinance.com](http://www.MasonryOrdinance.com).**