

May 2010

VIRGINIA MAIN STREET

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER



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All forms mentioned in this newsletter are attached to the e-newsletter for your convenience.

SPRING SPRUCE-UP:

Quick Clean-Up & Repairs to Freshen the Face of Main Street

After a long, harsh winter we are all ready to see the vivid colors of spring and enjoy some warm weather. While Mother Nature has washed away the snow and the grime to allow her landscape to shine and lure us outside, our buildings need a little more attention to brighten their faces and attract visitors downtown. So, roll up your sleeves for a little spring-cleaning and lure shoppers with a fresh look on Main Street!

Fix It First!

Although not the most glamorous of tasks, the first place to begin is assessing your building for needed repairs. Yearly build-up of street dirt and rain, heavy snow and freeze-thaw cycles can take their toll on a building causing masonry damage, gutter failure, and wood and metal deterioration. Addressing needed repairs and conducting routine maintenance each year will help prevent structural and cosmetic damage, and make your building a more attractive place for business. Take time to inspect the following areas for repairs:



A. Gutters and Downspouts- Water is a building's worst enemy; so that leaky downspout can cause irreparable damage if left unattended. Check all gutters to make sure they are free-flowing, are well attached to the building, and attachment points at downspouts are secure. Also, make sure downspouts have not cracked from ice and debris build-up. Replace any damaged areas with matching materials, or new half-round galvanized gutters, and repaint. Be sure all downspouts drain away from the building and adjacent buildings.

B. Flashing and Roofs- A quick inspection of upper floors and attics can identify roofing problems. To maintain a tight seal against water and weather, flashing along roof lines, and over cornices, window hoods and canopies needs to be securely attached and sloped away from the building for proper drainage. Repair or replace any roofing and flashing as needed.

C. Brick and Mortar- Deterioration of mortar joints at foundations, and cracks and spalling of brick, can also be due to water damage. Inspect brick facades for problems especially along the foundation of the building, along gutter lines, at brick sills, and at flashing points. Make any necessary repairs with matching brick, and using appropriate mortar mix matching tooling, texture and color. The National Park Service (NPS) Preservation Briefs and Old House Journal (OHJ) provide excellent technical specifications for masonry repair. See the Virginia Main Street Design Manual for information, or visit their web sites for more details.

D. Windows- The eyes in and out of your building deserve special attention during spring-cleaning. Inspect framing for signs of deterioration, rust on metal frames, rot on wood, and for paint failure. Make any necessary repairs to framing and trim, repainting as needed. Check putty along glass and framing, and reglaze if needed to secure and prevent future weather damage, and to help insulate. For specific repair information, check the NPS and OHJ articles. Last, but not least, wash the windows inside and out to give those eyes a little sparkle!



E. Trim and Framing- The decorative elements of a building define its character and are often what we notice first. Whether it's a heavy bracketed cornice and paneled wood storefront, or a deco-style curved metal canopy and aluminum frame windows, those features can suffer from everyday dirt and weather. Inspect all wood and metal, making repairs with matching materials to preserve those character-defining details. If needed, prime and repaint these elements. Sometimes, a good cleaning with mild detergent and water will restore a building's trim to like-new.

Clean Up & Renew!

After you have taken care of those maintenance and repair items, you are ready to move on to the glam- those items that enhance the image of a building or business and provide the wow factor. Whether it's a thorough cleaning or something new and different, the following items can brighten your building's image:

F. Awnings- A good scrubbing can do wonders for the appearance of your awning, creating a bright, clean look and revealing the true colors again. Washing off dirt and grim at least once a year can also lengthen the life of an awning. Use a soft brush, with a mild detergent and a gentle water spray to clean the awning. Check with the awning installer or fabric manufacturer, such as Sunbrella (www.sunbrella.com/na/care_cleaning.php) for specific recommendations. If your awning has seen better days, or you've always wondered what one would be like, a new awning is a great way to add some color to your building's face.

G. Signs- Take an objective look at your building signs: are they faded, dirty, or even out-of-date? Again, a little soap and water can revive the original colors and details on wood and metal signs. If paint is faded or chipping, have the sign repainted or touched up in spots. Replace any failing or out-dated window and door signs; and eliminate clutter from too many signs posted on doors or windows. For a completely different look, consider a new sign design to brighten the image of your business and building. New colors, a new logo, a different style such as projecting versus wall-mounted, or new lighting can present your business in a whole new light.



H. Paint Scheme- One of the easiest, high impact, and most economical ways to brighten your façade is to repaint. A new paint scheme will not only enhance the overall appearance, but is also smart maintenance. Periodic repainting, with proper scraping, sanding, and priming protects the wood and metal elements of a building.

Whether you maintain the existing colors, simply add an accent to trim, or implement a totally new color scheme, painting gives your building a bright, clean appearance and a fresh image that is good for business.



I. Landscaping and Planters-

Take a cue from Mother Nature and spruce up any landscaped areas around your building or parking areas. Simple weeding, and a fresh layer of mulch do wonders for appearances! If needed, install new plants that are appropriate for the area. Consulting your city's horticulturist or a professional landscape architect is always a good idea before investing in plant



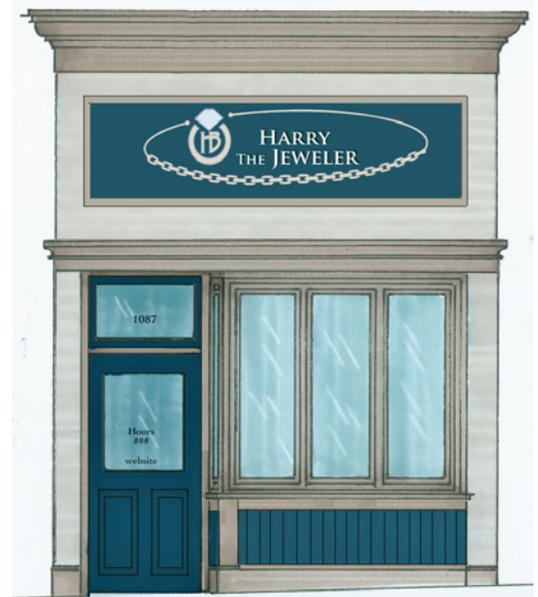
materials. Buildings on Main Street can often use a little color from well-placed planters at entrances. Check your city's building code to see what is allowed on sidewalks; and again, choose appropriate plant materials for the site as well as attractive and durable planters.

J. Façade Rehabilitation-

If your building needs more than a new coat of paint and a few simple repairs, maybe this is the time to consider a complete make-over. Whether it's using old photos to restore historic elements of the façade, or simply redesigning and refining it to better reflect the character of the building and Main Street, rehabilitation can greatly improve the appearance and function of your building.



This can be a great boost for business and the vitality of downtown.



Not Sure Where to Start?

Virginia Main Street can help! Building and business owners interested in implementing some of these improvements can obtain more information and assistance through the VMS Design Services. For paint schemes and sign designs to complete façade rehabilitation designs, contact the VMS Design Consultants following the procedures below.

Contact with VMS Design Consultant

All initial requests for design assistance should be made simultaneously through the Virginia Main Street office and the Frazier Associates, the VMS Design Consultant. Please make an VMS e-mail group and send requests to

- Jeff Sadler, Program Manager: Jeff.Sadler@dhcd.virginia.gov (804) 371-7030.
- Kyle Meyer, Kyle.Meyer@dhcd.virginia.gov
- Kathy Frazier, AIA, VMS Design Consultant: kfrazier@frazierassociates.com, (540) 886-6230
- Deneen Brannock, VMS Design Consultant, Designer: dbrannock@frazierassociates.com, (540) 886-6230

A Quick Overview for Spring Maintenance & Facade Improvements:



Technical Resources for Maintenance & Repairs:

National Park Service

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rhb/stand.htm

National Park Service Preservation Briefs

www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/

Old House Journal Index of Articles:
www.oldhousejournal.com/magazine/

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
www.dhr.virginia.gov/tax_credits/tax_credit.htm