

how to photograph a building

The design team is passionate about providing Texas Main Street cities with high quality images and ideas on how to revitalize historic buildings and downtown. They can work a lot of magic in Photoshop, but none of that magic can happen without a good photograph to start with. **The Design Team relies on you, the Main Street manager, to provide quality photos, so they can provide quality assistance.** This guide will help you do just that.

equipment:

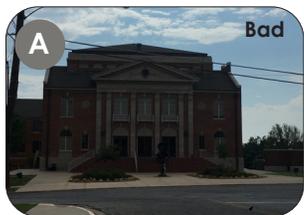
There is no need for a fancy camera. Your iPhone or other smart device will work to photograph a building.

resolution:

Today, most phones and cameras take decent quality photos when it comes to resolution. There is no need to change the presets before photographing. When a photo is emailed from a device, **always send in the actual size, so that the photo is large enough for the Design Team to work with.**

time of day:

The biggest factor that determines whether your photo will be good or not is the time of day. Too much shadow or too much glare can make a photo difficult to work with. The best time to take photos in a downtown situation is typically during the middle of the day, when the sun is high in the sky and there are minimal shadows. Look at the images below. In photo A on the left, you can see the beautiful blue sky, but the building is dark and the details are muddy. In photo B on the right, the sky is washed out, but the building details are crisp. Send in photo B on the right side. Design Staff can add a blue sky, **but the building features must be clear to start with.**



angle:

The most important picture to send Design Staff is an overall photograph showing the entire building. If the building has more than one side visible, try to capture the photo at the corner, so that both sides can be seen as shown in the Photo #1. Straight on pictures of the front facade also work well (#2). For multiple buildings, take the photo at an angle (#3). If the building is too large, take multiple pictures of the facade (#4a & #4b). Make sure to stay the same distance away from the building and move laterally to take pictures like the example below. Staff can easily make this one picture in Photoshop.



building visibility:

It's ok for cars or trees to block a small portion of the building. These elements make the picture automatically look more alive. However, make sure objects are not obscuring large portions of the building. For example, in photo #3, a few cars on the street blocks the lower portion of the streetscape, but a majority of the buildings can be seen. In photo #5, half of the building is blocked with a dumpster. Boards are also covering portions of the building. It's extremely difficult to recreate what is hidden and determine if historic elements are in place.



details:

Detail photographs are not always necessary, but they can be useful when you are trying to point out problem areas or architectural features. Detail shots help us understand what maintenance information we need to include in the design report. See Image #6 for examples. The more detail shots you include, the more we know about a building.