

Guidelines for maintaining the appearance of the Tyler County Courthouse

This document provides general guidance to county officials, employees, and local citizens in maintaining the historical integrity of the Tyler County Courthouse after its restoration. These guidelines are designed to serve as a way to maintain this important building. For further information, please see the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) *After the Restoration: Maintaining the Appearance of Your Historic Courthouse* available from the Maintenance department.

Artwork and Historic Exhibits

Artwork/Wall Decorations

Architecture and craftsmanship is the primary focal point of the restored Tyler County Courthouse. Any artwork must be (1) compatible and complimentary to the restoration, (2) approved by Tyler County Historical Commission (TCHC) and (3) recommended to Tyler County Commissioners Court (TCCC) for final approval. Photographs and paintings of historic or artistic significance to the County are appropriate in public areas and offices. Any exhibits or display artwork by the public must be coordinated through the TCHC.

Without approval, absolutely no signage or decorations are to be mounted (nails, tacks, tape, etc.) to the walls, doors, windows, fixtures, or furniture. After approval, do not attempt to hang anything on your own. If you wish to hang artwork or framed items in an office, contact the Maintenance Department. Maintenance staff will determine if items can be hung, and, if so, will hang the items.

Most wall decorations should be relatively flush with the wall. Items that protrude from the wall and that are not in keeping with the historical character of the space, such as trophies, mounted animal heads, and other displays, are not permitted.

Historic Exhibitions

At some point, TCHC and TCCC may consider special exhibits in the Courthouse. All such exhibitions will be under the direction of the TCHC and TCCC.

Signage

Public Notices

Post legal notices on a bulletin board in a locked glass case. Bulletin boards should be monitored on a regular basis to remove clutter and outdated notices. Personal notices, such as items for sale or community events, should be displayed only in the break room(s).

Adhesive Tape

The use of adhesive products, including any kind of tape, on any historic finish is not allowed.

Office and Directional Signs

All signage—building directories, room designations and directional signs—should be discreet and consistent with the restoration design and style. Signs should try to recreate those originally

used. Otherwise, new signs should be wall mounted (contact Maintenance Department for assistance with mounting) and feature clear, simple lettering.

Bunting and Banners

In the event that bunting or banners will be temporarily displayed on the building, take care to secure them in a manner that will not harm the structure or its architectural elements. Only colorfast fabrics and materials should be used. The placement of buntings and banners on the Courthouse grounds must be approved by the County Judge and should be coordinated through the Maintenance Department.

Exterior Signs

The placement of signage on the Courthouse grounds must be approved by the County Judge and should be coordinated through the Maintenance Department.

Decorations

Plants

Place drainage trays underneath plants to prevent water damage to floors and furniture. Plants must be maintained on a regular basis by pruning and dusting. Vines can damage the interior and exterior of buildings, thus trailing vines of any type are prohibited.

Personal Pictures

Personal pictures should be discreet and confined to office spaces. They should be placed on furniture instead of walls. (Also see *Artwork* above.) An alternative is to use photographs as screensavers or desktop backgrounds for computers.

Knick-knacks

Personal items that fall under the general category of knick-knacks, mementos, toys, or memorabilia, should be limited if they detract from the overall design of the area. When determined appropriate, they should be discreet and confined to personal workspaces.

Rugs

When necessary, rugs should be appropriate in size, design, and color. Area rugs may be used under tables to muffle sounds, but should not extend from wall to wall covering the historic flooring. The color, texture, and pattern of rugs should not detract from the architectural character of the space. Neutral colors, carpets without patterns and selections that blend into the surrounding floor appearance are suggested. Rugs should not be used in high-traffic areas where they can be tripping hazards.

Courthouse Lawn

Any displays on the Courthouse lawn must be approved by the County Judge and should be coordinated through the Maintenance Department.

Daily Operations

Vending Machines, Microwave Ovens, and Refrigerators

The Courthouse should have designated break rooms separate from public areas, and they should be used for obtrusive items such as vending machines, microwave ovens, coffee machines, refrigerators, and similar appliances.

Windows

Nothing may be placed in front of windows that block the view in and out from the windows. This includes furniture, bookshelves, file cabinets, etc.

File Cabinets

File cabinets should be used for filing and not as bulletin boards, excess storage areas, cubicle walls, or display tables.

Trash Cans

Use receptacles that are uniform and compatible with the overall interior style and design of the space.

Electrical Appliances

Clocks, radios, televisions, and other electrical appliances should be restricted to private office areas.

Posted Materials

Avoid office clutter by limiting the displays of materials such as memos, phone number lists, calendars, to-do lists, family artwork, and photographs, office humor, menus, etc. Such items should never be attached to the walls, fixtures, or furniture in any way, even temporarily. Adhesives are harmful to the walls and painted surfaces.

Gum and Tobacco

Gum can have an irreversible impact on furnishings and carpets. Make sure that gum is disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Smoking and the use of all other tobacco products is prohibited inside the courthouse. Keep all smoking to areas marked designated exterior spaces. Avoid smoking near vents and doorways, where smoke can migrate inside the building. Ensure that ample disposal receptacles are provided and that the smoking area(s) are regularly maintained.

Chair Floor Pads

Clear plastic floor pads used under office chairs to prevent damage to the floor are preferred in office spaces, especially for carpet areas or wood floors. The pads should be cleaned on a regular basis and replaced when they are broken or worn.

Courthouse Clutter

Where on-site storage is needed, file cabinets and/or boxes should be used, and they should be properly labeled and readily accessible. Periodic maintenance of storage areas is necessary to

cut down on dust, fire hazards, and insect infestations. Bulky items (furniture, appliances, signs, etc.) should be stored off-site.

All cleaning supplies should be stored in the janitor's office or area. Flammable supplies should be properly labeled and stored in flammable materials cabinets. Used paint should never be stored on site.

Avoid using open spaces (attics, bell towers, staircase closets, etc.) for excess storage. If there is not an immediate or foreseeable use for items, store them off-site.

Electrical Considerations

Space Heaters

Since space heaters can be a fire hazard, their use is restricted in the Courthouse. Where the use of space heaters cannot be avoided, check with Maintenance Department and your local fire marshal to determine applicable fire safety codes.

Extension Cords

If the use of extension cords cannot be avoided, they should be concealed without the use of tape, pins, or staples. Placing cords under carpets or rugs is a fire hazard and is not permitted. To protect computers and other office machinery use power surge protectors.

Holiday Lights and Other Decorations

When considering a decorating project, it is important to contact the Maintenance Department and the THC's Division of Architecture. ***Under the courthouse law, review by the THC is legally required.***

Although each situation is different, the THC offers the following as general recommendations:

- Decorate to minimize impact to the building, preferably with simple techniques in keeping with traditions characteristic of its style.
- Never Drill into brick, stone, or metal. Instead, when necessary, make attachments into the mortar using a metal hook or bolt that will not corrode or rust.
- When possible, string lights between hooks in the ground and gutters to prevent impact to historic materials. Consider decorating with temporary frames as an alternative to permanent changes.
- Wrap columns, railings, or chimneys with either waterproof ribbons or lights. This provides extensive coverage with few points of attachment.
- Remove wiring and lights each season rather than leaving them up all year.

Final Considerations

After a courthouse has been restored, a complete condition report is written that details all the materials used and equipment installed during the restoration. The report, which is filed at the Courthouse and the THC Division of Architecture office, can serve as a great resource regarding the care and maintenance of the building. If you have any questions, please contact the Maintenance Department.