

Case Study: Richardson, Texas

The City increased existing masonry requirements for single family residences in January 2003 – from 75% of the first floor to 75% of the entire structure. At the same time, the City chose to restrict the use of hardboard siding on new structures because of concerns about its long-term durability. Richardson has had some type of masonry requirement in place since its first zoning ordinance was passed in 1956 and has always limited the definition of masonry to brick or stone.

Stephen Roberts, City Planner:

“The decision to strengthen our masonry ordinance was driven by our residential strategies committee which expressed concerns about both the aesthetics and durability of second-story construction, which was being done primarily with siding. Like many cities, we have high-end neighborhoods that back up to major thoroughfares and, unfortunately, only the second floor was visible over the screening fences. While these were expensive homes, you couldn’t tell that by driving by – plus siding just doesn’t have the durability of brick and other masonry products.”

David Stanford, Assistant Building Official:

“Our decision to increase the amount of masonry required in new home construction was a direct result of our residential strategies committee’s desire to minimize the amount of siding on homes. What we found when we began researching our options was that the majority of the high-end homes built in the last two years were already coming close to meeting the new standard we were considering. The long-term benefit to making this kind of construction a requirement is that there is no maintenance required on brick. We know it will look good longer than other siding materials. There is simply no deterioration, and it keeps our residential areas looking good. Without an ordinance like this, our code department would have to generate hundreds more letters to residents reminding them of our upkeep requirements.”

JUST THE FACTS

City:	Richardson, Texas
Population:	91,050
Founded:	1873
Masonry	
Requirement:	Residential = 75% brick or stone
Ordinance Passed:	Originally in 1956 (updated in the 1970s and 2003)
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