

Dallas Brick: Big-City Homes, Big Weather Swings, and Masonry That Holds

A Working Mason's Guide to Brick Repair in Dallas, TX

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Chapter 1: Brick Repair Dallas TX — Why This City Is Its Own Masonry Country

I've worked brick in Dallas for decades, and I'll tell you straight: Dallas is its own masonry country. A brick house in Dallas lives a harder life than the same house would live in Phoenix or Atlanta or Chicago. The heat is longer, the freezes come out of nowhere, the soil underneath it never sits still, and the spring storms throw hail at it the size of golf balls. When somebody asks me about brick repair in Dallas TX, they're not asking about brick in general. They're asking about what this particular city does to masonry — and it does plenty.

Dallas is a brick town. Drive through Lakewood and you're looking at 1920s Tudors with soft, handmade-looking brick and mortar that's old enough to collect Social Security. Drive through the Park Cities and you're looking at some of the finest brickwork in Texas, built by people who paid for the best and got it. Drive up into North Dallas, Lake Highlands, or Preston Hollow and you're looking at miles of 1960s-through-1980s brick veneer ranch homes — good solid American

housing stock, most of it never repointed, most of it due. Drive through Oak Cliff and Kessler Park and you're looking at 1910s-to-1940s bungalows and craftsmans sitting on pier-and-beam, moving a little with every season. Every one of those houses has a different kind of brick, a different kind of mortar, and a different set of problems. But they're all fighting the same three enemies, and those enemies are Dallas itself: the weather swings, the black clay soil, and time.

This book is the tour. I'm going to walk you through what Dallas weather does to brick, what the clay does to walls, which repairs come up again and again on Dallas houses, what they cost in 2026, and how to hire the job right. If you own a brick home anywhere from White Rock Lake to the LBJ corridor, this is the book I wish somebody had handed you the day you got the keys.

A word about how I work, so you know what you're reading. I give cost ranges, not quotes — ranges with the "depends on" built in, because every wall is its own job. I don't invent numbers. Where I quote a 2026 cost figure in this book, it comes from published contractor data for this year, and I'll tell you what the data says and where Dallas sits inside it. Where I can't verify a number, I'll tell you what drives the

cost instead of making one up. That's the deal.

Chapter 2: Know Your Decade — Dallas

Housing Stock and Its Brick

The first thing I do on any Dallas job is figure out the decade. The decade tells me what kind of brick I'm looking at, what mortar it was laid with, and how the wall was built — and that tells me what the repair has to be. Get the decade wrong and you can do real damage, especially on the older stuff.

1920s–1930s: the Tudors and colonials. Lakewood, Forest Hills, parts of East Dallas, the M Streets, Highland Park, University Park. These are the brick beauties — Tudor revival with steep gables, colonial revival with symmetrical fronts, some of the prettiest masonry in the state. The brick is often softer than modern brick, and the mortar on the oldest ones is lime mortar — soft, chalky, forgiving. This is the stock where the number-one rule is: do NOT let anybody repoint it with hard modern mortar. Hard mortar against soft 1920s brick will pop the faces off the brick within a few years. These houses want a mason who knows lime mortar and knows how to match it. They also tend to have real chimneys — tall, ornate, multi-flue — that take the worst of the

weather.

1940s–1950s: the post-war bungalows and minimal traditionals. Oak Cliff, Kessler Park, parts of East Dallas, Casa Linda, Lake Highlands' older sections. Smaller homes, simpler brickwork, often pier-and-beam foundations. Pier-and-beam means the house moves — gently, seasonally, forever — and the brick veneer moves with it. Mortar on these houses works hard. You'll see more joint cracking here than on slab houses of the same age, and that's normal. The repair is usually repointing, not panic.

1960s–1980s: the great brick veneer ranches. This is most of North Dallas, Preston Hollow's mid-century sections, Lake Highlands, Northwood Hills, and a thousand subdivisions along the LBJ and Central Expressway corridors. Brick veneer over wood frame on a slab — the standard Texas house. The brick itself is usually hard, modern, durable. The mortar is standard Portland-cement mortar, Type N or thereabouts. These houses are now 40 to 60 years old, which means their mortar is in the window — 20 to 30 years is normal joint life, and a lot of these houses are on their second cycle of needing it or never got the first. Chimneys on these houses are the number-one repair item I see. Lintels over windows and

garage doors are number two — the steel is 40-plus years old and a lot of it is rusting.

1990s–2000s: the bigger veneers and early McMansions.

Far North Dallas, parts of Lake Highlands infill, the tollway corridor. Bigger houses, more brick, more decorative work — arches, soldier courses, keystones. More surface area means more mortar to maintain, and the decorative elements are fiddlier to repair. Mortar matching matters more here because the original mortar often had a specific color — buff, tan, white — and a bad match shows.

2010s–today: infill and new construction. Tear-downs replaced with new builds all over East Dallas, Lakewood's edges, and North Dallas. New brick, new mortar, shouldn't need anything for years — but I still get called to new builds for flashing mistakes, weep holes that got mortared shut, and brick laid too tight to grade. New doesn't mean right.

Find your decade before you call anybody. When you tell a mason "it's a 1932 Tudor in Lakewood," a good one hears everything he needs to hear. A bad one hears nothing. That's your first filter.

Chapter 3: What Dallas Weather Does to Brick

Dallas weather doesn't have moods — it has swings, and the swings are what kill masonry. Brick and mortar handle steady conditions fine. It's the cycling that breaks them.

Summer heat. Dallas runs 100 degrees and up for weeks at a time, and brick walls bake. The south and west faces of your house take direct sun all afternoon, and the surface temperature of that brick gets far hotter than the air. Then evening comes and it cools. That daily expansion and contraction works the mortar joints, year after year, decade after decade. It's slow, but it's relentless. The sun sides of a Dallas house always need repointing first — walk any 30-year-old brick home in Lake Highlands and the south wall will tell the story before the north wall says a word.

Winter freezes. Dallas doesn't get Chicago winters, but it gets freezes that matter more because nothing here is built for them. A hard freeze after a rain — water sitting in the mortar joints, then freezing and expanding — is the classic spalling machine. The February 2021 freeze was the extreme version: pipes bursting everywhere, but also a brutal freeze-thaw

event for masonry that had been saturated. I still see 2021's fingerprints on Dallas brick — spalled faces, popped mortar — on houses that were fine before it. Even a normal Dallas winter gives you a dozen freeze-thaw cycles, and every one of them works on any joint or brick face that's already holding water.

Hail. Spring in Dallas means hail, and some years it means serious hail. Hail doesn't usually break brick, but it beats up mortar joints, chips brick faces and corners, destroys chimney caps, and shreds the soft mortar on older homes. After a big hail spring — and Dallas gets one every few years — I get a wave of calls about chipped brick and damaged caps. If your roof took hail damage, have somebody look at your chimney while they're up there. Same storm, same beating.

Drought-to-deluge. This is the Dallas special. A dry summer bakes the black clay soil until it shrinks and pulls away from foundations. Then fall brings heavy rain and the soil swells back up. The house rides that cycle — down a fraction in August, up a fraction in October — and the brick veneer, which is rigid and brittle, cracks at the mortar joints to absorb the movement. Those stair-step cracks through

mortar joints that Dallas homeowners know so well? That's the soil talking. The cracks themselves are usually a repointing job. But the movement behind them deserves respect — we'll get to that in the next chapter.

Wind and driving rain. Dallas spring storms don't just drop hail; they drive rain sideways into walls. Brick veneer is designed to handle this — it's a rain screen, not a waterproof wall, and the cavity behind it drains through weep holes. But only if the weep holes are open, the flashing is intact, and the mortar joints are sound. Driving rain finds every weak joint and every clogged weep hole. After a storm season, the water stains tell you where the wall's defenses failed.

None of this means brick is a bad choice in Dallas. Brick is the right choice in Dallas — it's why the whole city is built of it. It just means Dallas brick needs maintenance on a Dallas schedule, not a national one. The national guidance says mortar lasts 20 to 30 years. In Dallas, with our soil and our swings, I tell people to start looking at year 15 and plan on it by year 25.

Chapter 4: The Blackland Clay — Dallas's Expansive Soil

If Dallas weather is the hammer, the black clay soil is the anvil. The Blackland Prairie soil under most of Dallas is expansive clay — it swells when wet and shrinks when dry, and it moves with enough force to crack concrete. Every foundation company in Dallas will tell you this. What they don't always tell you is what it means for your brick.

Brick veneer is a rigid skin hung on a wood frame, and the frame sits on a slab that rides the soil. When the soil moves unevenly — one corner wetter than the other, one side shaded and one side baked — the slab tilts or flexes a fraction of an inch. The wood frame flexes with it. The brick veneer can't flex, so it cracks, and it cracks in the mortar joints, because the mortar is the weak link by design. That's what stair-step cracking is: the wall drawing you a map of where the movement happened.

Here's what fifty years has taught me about reading those cracks:

Hairline stair-steps that haven't changed in years are

usually old, stable movement. The wall moved, the mortar cracked, the movement stopped or stabilized. This is a repointing job. Cut out the cracked joints, put in new mortar, done. Millions of Dallas homes have these and live fine with them for decades.

Fresh, clean cracks with sharp edges mean recent movement. Somebody should figure out why before you repoint over it. It might be a one-time event — a drought summer followed by a wet fall — or it might be ongoing. Repointing over active movement is painting a sinking ship; the new mortar will crack the same way.

Wide cracks — a quarter inch or more — or cracks that keep growing are not a masonry job. That's a foundation evaluation. Call a foundation company, get the slab checked, and fix the movement first. Then call the mason.

Horizontal cracks, bulging walls, or brick pulling away from the frame are structural. Stop and get a professional evaluation. That's beyond repointing.

The honest truth about Dallas: most stair-step cracking I see is the first kind — old, stable, cosmetic, and fixable with repointing. But you don't get to assume that. You look, you

measure, and if there's any doubt, the foundation gets checked before the mortar gets mixed. A mason who repoints a wall that's actively moving without saying a word about it is either ignorant or dishonest. Either way, you don't want him.

One more Dallas-specific note: trees. A big oak or pecan near the house drinks hundreds of gallons a week in a Dallas summer, drying the soil on one side of the slab while the other side stays moist. That differential is a crack factory. I'm not telling you to cut down your trees — Dallas without its oaks isn't Dallas — but if you've got stair-step cracks on the same side as a big tree, that's not a coincidence, and a soaker hose run in a dry summer is cheaper than any repair.

Chapter 5: Chimneys — The Tallest, Most Beat-Up Brick on a Dallas House

More brick repair in Dallas TX starts with a chimney than with anything else. The chimney is the tallest masonry on your house, the most exposed, and the least forgiving. It takes full sun, driving rain, hail, freeze-thaw, and thermal shock from the flue — sometimes all in the same week, because this is Dallas. The mortar on a chimney fails first, and when it fails, water gets in. Water in a chimney is how a \$1,200 repoint becomes a \$5,000 rebuild. I've watched it happen hundreds of times.

The 2026 numbers, from published national contractor data: chimney repointing or tuckpointing runs **\$500 to \$2,500**, averaging around \$1,200. Crown repair — fixing cracks in the concrete cap on top — runs **\$200 to \$700 and up**. Full crown replacement runs **\$1,000 to \$3,000**. A new chimney cap runs **\$200 to \$850** installed. Flashing repair where the chimney meets the roof runs **\$300 to \$1,800**. Spalling brick repair on a chimney runs **\$1,000 to \$3,500**. A partial rebuild — taking the stack down to sound brick and rebuilding above the roofline

— runs **\$1,000 to \$5,000 and up**. A full chimney rebuild runs **\$4,000 to \$15,000**. A leaning chimney straightened and stabilized runs **\$2,000 to \$4,000**. A basic chimney inspection runs **\$80 to \$200**.

Where does Dallas sit in those ranges? Middle to upper-middle. Dallas labor is reasonable, but Dallas chimneys work hard — the access is often steep-roofed, the heat limits working hours in summer, and a lot of Dallas chimneys are tall two-story stacks on 1970s and 80s homes with 40-plus years of deferred maintenance. The chimney I see most in Dallas is a 1978 North Dallas two-story with mortar that's never been touched, a crown with hairline cracks, and flashing that's been "repaired" with caulk three times. That chimney is a \$1,500 to \$2,500 job if you catch it now, and a rebuild if you wait five years.

The Dallas chimney checklist — what I look at, in order:

The crown. The concrete slab on top. If it's cracked, water is going straight down into the chimney. Hairline cracks get sealed. Badly cracked or deteriorated crowns get replaced. This is the single highest-leverage chimney item: a \$200 tube of crown sealant applied in time beats a \$3,000 crown replacement every time.

The cap. The metal cover over the flue. Missing, rusted, or hail-beaten caps let water and animals in. Cheap fix, big protection.

The mortar joints. The screwdriver test from the ground with binoculars: if the joints are receding or crumbling, it's repointing time. Dallas chimney mortar goes first on the south and west faces, same as walls.

The flashing. Where the chimney exits the roof. Failed flashing is the number-one source of "my chimney leaks" calls, and half the time the brick is fine — it's the flashing. Look for water stains on the ceiling near the chimney or on the chimney breast inside.

The brick itself. Spalling faces, cracked units, leaning. Spalling on a Dallas chimney is usually freeze-thaw on waterlogged brick — the 2021 freeze wrote a lot of these.

If you need a mason for the brickwork and a chimney specialist for the flue and liner, that's normal — they're different trades. For the masonry side — repointing, crowns, caps, flashing-adjacent brickwork, partial rebuilds — that's [chimney and lintel repair](<https://lintlerepair.com>) territory, and it's what we do. Get the chimney looked at before hail

season, not after. March is the month.

Chapter 6: Lintels — The Steel Over Every Opening That's Quietly Rusting

Every window, door, and garage opening in your brick veneer has a steel lintel over it — an angle iron or beam carrying the brick above the opening. You can't see most of it; it's buried in the wall with just the bottom edge showing. And on a huge percentage of Dallas homes built before 1990, that steel is rusting.

Rust is the whole story with lintels. Steel rusts, rust expands — up to several times the original steel volume — and that expansion jacks the brickwork apart. The classic signs: stair-step cracks above windows and doors, rust stains bleeding down the brick, the brick above an opening sagging or bowing slightly, displaced bricks near the tops of windows. If you see rust staining on your brick under a window head, that's not dirt. That's a lintel telling you it's in trouble.

The 2026 numbers: surface rust treatment — cleaning, priming, and painting a lintel that's rusty but structurally sound — runs **\$200 to \$500 per lintel**. Full window lintel replacement runs **\$1,000 to \$3,000**. Door lintels, which carry

more load, run **\$1,500 to \$4,000**. Garage door lintels and I-beam work run higher — **\$2,000 to \$6,000 and up** for the big spans. Those are published national ranges; Dallas sits in the middle of them.

Here's the Dallas angle: our 1960s-to-1980s veneer homes almost universally used plain steel lintels, many never properly primed or painted, and forty-plus years of humidity and driving rain have done their work. The garage door lintel is the one I get called about most — it's the longest span, carries the most brick, and when it goes, the sag over a 16-foot garage door is visible from the street. Catch rust early and it's a \$200-to-\$500 treatment. Wait until the steel has thinned and the brick has displaced, and you're into replacement plus rebuilding the brickwork above the opening.

What a proper lintel job looks like: the brick above the opening gets carefully removed, the old lintel comes out, a new galvanized or properly coated steel lintel goes in with correct bearing on each side, the brick goes back with matching mortar, and the new steel gets primed and painted so the cycle doesn't restart. It's structural work — not a handyman job, not a caulk job. And anyone who tells you

they can "fix" a structurally failed lintel with sealant is selling you time, not a repair.

If you're seeing the signs — cracking above openings, rust stains, sagging — get a [chimney and lintel repair](<https://lintlerepair.com>) specialist to look at it. Lintel work is one of those jobs where the right diagnosis up front saves thousands, because the difference between "treat the rust" and "replace the steel" is the difference between hundreds and thousands.

Chapter 7: Tuckpointing in Dallas — When the Joints Give Out

Tuckpointing — cutting out failed mortar and packing in new — is the most common brick repair in Dallas TX, and it's not close. Between the heat cycling, the soil movement, and forty-year-old mortar on millions of veneer homes, Dallas eats mortar joints. I've covered the full technical side of this in my free book on tuckpointing costs, so here I'm going to give you the Dallas version: when Dallas brick needs it, what it costs here, and what Dallas-specific mistakes to avoid.

Dallas-specific pricing, from 2026 published data: brick and stone tuckpointing in Dallas runs about **\$9.65 per square foot**, with a reported range of roughly **\$7.94 to \$11.35 per square foot**. That's a Dallas-market figure, and it lines up with what I see: straightforward ground-level repointing on a Dallas veneer home lands in that band. It goes up from there with height — second-story work, chimneys, anything needing scaffolding — and with matching difficulty. A Lakewood Tudor with lime mortar and a custom sand match costs more per foot than a 1985 North Dallas veneer with

standard mortar, because the craft is harder.

When does Dallas brick need tuckpointing? The signs are the same as anywhere, accelerated by our conditions: mortar that powders or crumbles under a screwdriver, joints receded back from the brick face, white efflorescence staining that keeps returning, crumbled mortar piled at the base of walls, and stair-step cracking through joints. Check the south and west walls first — they fail first in Dallas — then the chimney, then anywhere sprinklers spray the wall. Sprinkler spray on brick is a Dallas epidemic; I can spot the sprinkler-damaged section of a wall from the curb. Redirect the head. It's free.

The Dallas mistakes I see:

Repointing over active movement. Covered in Chapter 4. Dallas soil moves; make sure it's done moving before you pay for new mortar.

Wrong mortar on old brick. Covered in Chapter 2. Lakewood and Park Cities homes with soft brick and lime mortar get destroyed by hard modern repointing. If your mason doesn't know what lime mortar is, he doesn't work on your 1928 Tudor.

Sealing instead of repointing. Dallas gets a lot of "waterproofing" pitches — spray the wall with sealer instead of fixing the joints. Sealer over failed mortar traps water in the wall and accelerates the damage. Repoint first. Then, maybe, a breathable sealer — breathable is non-negotiable — if the wall actually needs it. Most don't.

Spot-repairing what's really a wall job. A mason who'll happily repoint one 10-foot section while the other 60 feet of the same wall are powdering isn't doing you a favor. Sometimes the honest answer is the whole elevation. Get the square footage of failed joint measured and make the call on data.

Tuckpointing is maintenance, not emergency — but it's maintenance with a clock. Failed joints let water into the wall, and water in the wall is what turns a \$1,500 repoint into a \$5,000 brick replacement. In Dallas, with our driving rains and freezes, that clock runs faster than the national guidance admits.

Chapter 8: Spalling Brick — When the Face Falls Off

Spalling is when the face of the brick pops or flakes off, leaving a rough, crumbly surface. It's ugly, it's progressive — it doesn't stop on its own — and in Dallas it's almost always a water story.

The mechanism is simple: brick absorbs water. Water freezes and expands. The expansion blows the face off the brick. Dallas doesn't freeze often, but when it does, it usually does it after rain — saturated brick, then a hard freeze overnight. That's the recipe. The February 2021 freeze was a mass spalling event for Dallas masonry; I still get calls from homeowners who noticed the damage that spring and have been watching it get worse since. Every normal winter adds a few more cycles on top.

Spalling can also come from the mortar side: hard, impermeable mortar (or paint, or non-breathable sealer) on soft brick traps moisture inside the brick. The water can't get out through the joint, so it works on the brick face instead. This is another reason the "harder is better" instinct destroys

old Dallas brick — the mortar is supposed to be the part that breathes and gives.

What to do about spalled brick depends on how bad it is:

Light surface flaking on a few bricks — monitor it. Make sure water isn't being driven at the wall (gutters, sprinklers, grading), and consider a breathable water repellent formulated for masonry. This won't reverse the damage, but it can slow it.

Faces popping off across a section of wall — those brick units are done. The repair is cutting out the damaged bricks and replacing them with matching units. Spalling brick repair runs **\$1,000 to \$3,500** in the 2026 national data, depending on how many units and where they are. Matching is the craft here — Dallas brick from the 60s through the 80s came from regional yards, and a good mason knows where to find close matches or how to blend.

Widespread spalling across whole elevations — this is a wall problem, not a brick problem. Something is soaking the wall: failed mortar everywhere, bad flashing, water trapped behind the veneer, grade too high. Replacing bricks without fixing the water source is mopping with the tap running. Find

the water first.

Painted brick that's spalling underneath — painted brick is its own chapter of trouble. Standard paint traps moisture in brick veneer. If your Dallas home's brick was painted and it's now spalling, the paint is likely part of the cause. Stripping paint from brick is expensive and risky; the honest advice is usually to manage it — keep water away, use breathable coatings only — rather than promise a restoration.

The prevention is boring and it works: keep water off the wall. Gutters that actually drain away from the house. Sprinklers that don't spray brick. Grade sloping away from the foundation. Weep holes open. Mortar joints sound. Do those five things and Dallas brick lasts generations. Skip them and the freeze will find the weak spot — it always does.

Chapter 9: Reading the Lines — Stair-Step Cracks and What They're Telling You

If Dallas brickwork has a signature, it's the stair-step crack — a crack that zigzags through mortar joints, stepping up or down across the wall like a staircase. Every Dallas homeowner sees one eventually. Most of them are harmless. Some of them aren't. Here's how to read them.

What they are. The crack follows the mortar joints because the mortar is weaker than the brick — that's by design. When the wall moves differentially — one part settling or heaving relative to another — the joints give along the path of least resistance, which is the stepped path through head joints and bed joints. The crack is the wall's stress relief. It's doing its job.

Where they show up in Dallas. The classics: above and below windows and doors (the openings concentrate stress), at the corners of the house, over the garage door (long span, heavy load), and anywhere the foundation has moved unevenly. On slab homes, they often appear after a drought summer or an unusually wet season. On pier-and-beam

homes in Oak Cliff and Kessler Park, they're part of the seasonal rhythm.

How to read them. Width matters. Hairline — less than a sixteenth of an inch — is almost always cosmetic and old. Up to an eighth is common and usually stable. A quarter inch or more deserves a foundation look before any masonry work. Change matters more than width: a crack that's been the same for five years is a different animal from one that grew last month. Take a photo with a coin next to it for scale, date it, and check it in six months. That's the poor man's crack monitor, and it works.

Direction matters. Cracks that step diagonally from a window corner down toward the foundation usually point to settlement below. Cracks stepping up from a door corner toward the middle of a wall can indicate heaving. Horizontal cracking is the one that gets my attention fastest — it can mean the wall is being pushed laterally, and that's structural.

The repair. Stable stair-step cracks get repointed — the cracked joints cut out and filled with new mortar. That's it. It's straightforward, it's permanent as long as the movement has stopped, and it's one of the most satisfying repairs in the trade because the wall looks new when you're done. Unstable

cracks get monitored or get a foundation fix first. Structural cracks get an engineer.

The mistake I see most: homeowners who caulk stair-step cracks. Caulk in a mortar joint looks terrible, fails fast in Dallas heat, and hides the crack's behavior — you can't tell if it's growing when it's full of caulk. If the crack bothers you, repoint it properly. If it doesn't bother you and it's stable, leave it alone and spend the money on the chimney.

Chapter 10: Water — Finding Where It's Getting In

Every brick problem in Dallas is a water problem if you trace it back far enough. Mortar fails faster when it's wet. Brick spalls when it's saturated. Efflorescence is water carrying salts out of the wall. Interior leaks near chimneys and windows are water finding the weak joint. So the most valuable chapter in this book might be this one: how water gets into a Dallas brick wall, and how to stop it.

Brick veneer is a rain screen, not a waterproof wall. This is the single most misunderstood fact about Dallas houses. Your brick veneer is designed to get wet. Rain hits the brick, some absorbs, most runs down the face, and what gets through drains down the cavity between the brick and the wood frame and exits through weep holes at the base. The system works — when every part of it works. When one part fails, water goes where it shouldn't.

Weep holes. Those little gaps in the mortar at the base of the wall, every few feet. They're the drain. And on an astonishing number of Dallas homes, they're clogged with mortar

droppings from construction, painted shut, or buried under raised flower beds and mulch. A wall with no working weep holes is a wall holding water. Check yours. They should be open and visible above grade. If mulch or soil is piled over them, pull it back — grade should be several inches below the weep holes, not covering them.

Flashing. Metal flashing at the base of walls, over windows and doors, and where the chimney meets the roof directs water out of the cavity. When flashing corrodes, was installed wrong, or was "repaired" with caulk, water pours into the wall instead of out of it. Flashing failures are behind a huge share of the interior water stains I get called about. The brick looks fine. The flashing isn't.

Gutters and downspouts. Dallas spring storms dump enormous water in short bursts. Gutters that overflow, downspouts that discharge at the foundation, or missing gutters entirely will soak a brick wall and the soil beneath it. Every downspout should carry water at least several feet from the house. This is the cheapest water management there is, and it's the most skipped.

Grading. Soil should slope away from the house. Flower beds built up against the brick trap water against the wall and

bury the weep holes. I see this on half the houses I visit in Dallas — beautiful landscaping doing slow damage to the masonry. Keep soil and mulch below the weep holes and sloping away.

Sprinklers. I've mentioned it twice because it deserves it twice. A sprinkler head spraying a brick wall every morning is a demolition crew on a timer. The constant wet-dry cycling destroys mortar joints faster than anything else in Dallas. Walk your sprinkler zones and look at where the water actually lands.

Efflorescence — the white staining. Those white crystalline stains on brick are mineral salts carried out by water and left behind when it evaporates. A little, once, after construction or after a wet season, is cosmetic — brush it off. Efflorescence that keeps coming back in the same spot is a water arrow pointing at the entry point. Follow it uphill. The water is getting in above where the stain appears.

Fix the water, and half your masonry problems stop getting worse. It's the least glamorous advice in this book and the most valuable.

Chapter 11: Dallas Brick Restoration — The Old Ones Deserve a Specialist

There's brick repair, and then there's Dallas brick restoration — and they're different jobs. Repair fixes a problem. Restoration brings a 1920s Lakewood Tudor or a 1915 Highland Park colonial back to what it was, with materials and methods that respect what the original builders did. If you own one of Dallas's older brick homes, this chapter is for you.

The mortar rule is everything. Pre-1930s Dallas brick was laid in lime mortar — soft, breathable, flexible. Modern Portland-cement mortar is hard, rigid, and impermeable by comparison. Put hard mortar against soft old brick and the brick loses: faces spall, units crack, and within a few years the "repair" has destroyed what it was supposed to save. This is the number-one way old Dallas brick gets ruined, and it happens constantly, usually by well-meaning contractors who only know one mortar.

A restoration mason matches the original mortar — in strength first, then color and texture. That means test

batches, not a bag of premix. It means knowing the difference between Type O, lime mortar, and the various historic mixes. It means cutting joints by hand where the brick is soft enough to be damaged by a grinder. It's slower and it costs more, and on a 1928 Tudor it's the only right way.

The brick matching problem. When old brick units need replacing — spalled beyond saving, cracked through — you can't buy 1925 Dallas brick at the supply house. The regional brick of that era came from local yards with local clays, and the color and texture are specific. A restoration mason sources reclaimed brick from architectural salvage, finds the closest modern match and blends it, or pulls units from a hidden part of the house — inside the garage, behind a bush — and uses them on the visible repair. Ask your mason where his replacement brick comes from. "The supply house" is the wrong answer on a 1920s home.

Cleaning historic brick. Never sandblast. Never use high-pressure washing. Never use muriatic acid straight. All three destroy old brick faces and mortar. Proper historic cleaning is low-pressure water, soft brushes, and detergents formulated for masonry — or just leaving the patina alone. A century of Dallas weather on brick is not dirt. It's character.

What restoration costs. Honestly: more than repair, sometimes double, because everything is slower and fussier. But on a Lakewood Tudor or a Park Cities colonial, the house is worth it, and a bad cheap job actively destroys value. Get a mason who does historic work specifically — not a mason who says he can figure it out. Ask to see his historic jobs. Drive by them.

Dallas's old brick homes are the soul of the city's neighborhoods. They survived a century of our weather. They deserve repairs that help them survive another one.

Chapter 12: Mailboxes, Retaining Walls, and the Other Brick on Your Lot

Not all Dallas brick is on the house. The mailbox at the curb, the retaining wall holding up the sloped lot, the garden walls, the outdoor fireplace — they're all masonry, they all live outside in Dallas weather with zero protection, and they all fail in predictable ways.

Brick mailboxes. Dallas subdivisions love their brick mailboxes, and Dallas soil loves to move them. A mailbox is a small masonry column on a small footing, and when the clay shrinks in August, the footing moves. The classic failure is a lean — the whole mailbox tilting — or cracked mortar joints from differential movement. A leaning mailbox usually needs to come down to the footing and be rebuilt plumb; there's no straightening a masonry column. Rebuilding a brick mailbox typically runs a few hundred to around a thousand dollars depending on size and brick matching — it's a small job, but it's all labor. The other mailbox killer is impact — cars, mowers, the occasional storm-blown trash can. Brick mailboxes don't survive impacts; they shatter. If yours took a

hit, save the brick — a mason can often reuse the original units in the rebuild, which keeps the match perfect.

Retaining walls. Dallas's rolling terrain — especially around White Rock Lake, Kessler Park, and the bluffs — means a lot of brick and stone retaining walls. Retaining walls fail from water pressure behind them, not from the brick giving up. If your retaining wall is bowing, leaning, or the joints are blowing out, the problem is drainage: water building up behind the wall with nowhere to go. The repair is rebuilding with proper drainage — gravel backfill, drain pipe, weep holes that actually weep. A retaining wall rebuilt without drainage is a retaining wall that'll fail again. Costs vary wildly with height and length, but understand what you're buying: the drainage is the repair, the brick is just the face.

Garden and landscape walls. Low brick walls around beds and yards mostly suffer from the same mortar aging as house walls, plus mower damage and sprinkler abuse. They're straightforward repointing or partial rebuild jobs. The main advice: don't let the landscaper bury the base in mulch. Brick wants to breathe at the bottom.

Outdoor fireplaces and kitchens. Dallas outdoor living means a lot of brick fireplaces and kitchen structures, and

they take brutal thermal cycling — roaring fire one evening, cold the next morning, plus rain in between. Firebox brick and mortar need refractory materials, not standard mortar. If your outdoor fireplace is spalling inside the firebox, that's heat damage, and standard repointing won't hold — it needs the right high-heat materials.

The theme: the brick off the house gets less attention and more abuse than the brick on it. Walk your lot once a year the same way you walk your walls. The mailbox you catch leaning at five degrees is a repair. At fifteen degrees, it's a rebuild.

Chapter 13: What Brick Repair Costs in Dallas in 2026

Let's put the Dallas numbers in one place. These are 2026 published ranges from national contractor data, with my read on where Dallas sits in each. Every one of these is a "depends on" — scope, height, access, matching, and condition move every job inside its range.

General brick repair. Angi's 2026 Dallas data puts brick siding repair at **\$15 to \$18 per square foot**, with the average Dallas siding repair job landing around \$1,020 (most jobs between \$456 and \$1,623). Manta's 2026 figures for Dallas County put typical brick repair jobs between **\$426 and \$3,322**. That spread is the whole story of this trade: a small patch is hundreds, a wall section is thousands.

Tuckpointing and repointing. Dallas-specific data: about **\$9.65 per square foot**, ranging roughly **\$7.94 to \$11.35**. National data runs **\$5 to \$25 per square foot** depending on height and difficulty, with most residential work between \$10 and \$25. Ground-level Dallas veneer work sits at the low end of the national range; chimney and second-story work sits at

the high end.

Chimney work. Repointing **\$500–\$2,500** (avg ~\$1,200). Crown repair **\$200–\$700+**. Crown replacement **\$1,000–\$3,000**. Cap replacement **\$200–\$850**. Flashing repair **\$300–\$1,800**. Spalling brick repair **\$1,000–\$3,500**. Partial rebuild **\$1,000–\$5,000+**. Full rebuild **\$4,000–\$15,000**. Leaning chimney **\$2,000–\$4,000**. Inspection **\$80–\$200**.

Lintels. Rust treatment **\$200–\$500 per lintel**. Window lintel replacement **\$1,000–\$3,000**. Door lintel replacement **\$1,500–\$4,000**. Garage and I-beam lintels **\$2,000–\$6,000+**.

What moves Dallas bids inside these ranges:

- **Height and access.** Ground-level is one price. Second story, steep roofs, and chimneys are another — scaffolding and lift time are real money.
- **Matching.** Standard mortar on a 1980s veneer is straightforward. Lime mortar on a 1928 Tudor with a custom sand match is craft work, priced accordingly.
- **Scope honesty.** A bid on measured square footage of failed joint is a bid you can trust. A bid on "the whole wall" without measuring is a guess with your money.
- **Hidden conditions.** Brick replacement discovered

mid-job, flashing that needs doing while the mason is there, a crown that's worse than it looked from the ground. Good contractors warn you upfront and put it in writing.

The Dallas value play. Bundle. If the mason is setting up scaffolding for your chimney, that's the moment to have him look at the second-story joints, the flashing, and the lintels up high. Mobilization — getting crew, equipment, and materials to your house — is a fixed cost. One mobilization covering three repairs is dramatically cheaper than three mobilizations. And get three bids, throw out the outliers, and interview the middle — the rule that never fails.

Chapter 14: The Drive-Through — What I See Street by Street

I've spent decades driving Dallas streets looking at brick. Here's the tour the way I see it — neighborhood by neighborhood, the patterns that repeat.

Lakewood and Forest Hills. The Tudors. Beautiful, soft brick, lime mortar, tall ornate chimneys, ninety years of weather. What I see: mortar that's never been repointed and desperately needs it, chimneys with failed crowns, and — the heartbreaker — old brick that's been repointed with hard modern mortar by somebody who didn't know better, now spalling. If you own here, your house needs a restoration mason, not a repair mason. There's a difference, and your brick knows it.

Highland Park and University Park. The finest brickwork in Dallas, built when money bought craftsmanship. What I see: generally well-maintained, because these homeowners maintain — but also some of the most aggressive "improvements," like painted brick and sealed walls, that trap moisture in century-old masonry. And chimneys — big,

complex, multi-flue chimneys that cost real money when they go. Maintain, don't modernize, the masonry.

Oak Cliff and Kessler Park. Bungalows and craftsmans, pier-and-beam, big trees, real character. What I see: seasonal movement cracking — normal for pier-and-beam, usually stable — and mortar joints that work harder than anywhere else in the city. Also a lot of DIY repointing with the wrong mortar. The advice here: respect the movement, repoint what's stable, and keep the big oaks watered in August so the soil doesn't shrink out from under one corner.

North Dallas and Preston Hollow. The great veneer ranches, 1960s to 1980s, miles of them. What I see: chimneys, chimneys, chimneys. Forty-to-sixty-year-old chimney mortar, original crowns, original flashing. And rusting lintels over windows and garage doors — the steel is the same age as the house and it's telling. This is the highest-volume brick repair territory in Dallas, and it's almost all maintenance that was due five years ago.

Lake Highlands. Similar era to North Dallas, similar story, with a freeze-thaw accent — slightly more exposure, slightly more spalling. What I see: south and west walls needing repointing while the north walls still look fine, which

confuses homeowners. It's not confusing. It's the sun.

East Dallas and the M Streets. Transitional — 1920s to 1950s stock mixed with new infill. What I see: old brick next to new brick, and the old brick losing the comparison because it's been neglected while the money went to the kitchen remodel. Also a lot of new construction with flashing and weep-hole mistakes — the kind of thing a five-year-old house shouldn't have, but does.

Far North Dallas and the tollway corridor. Bigger homes, more brick, more decorative masonry. What I see: more surface area to maintain, decorative elements — arches, soldier courses, quoins — that need a mason with an eye, and sprinkler systems soaking walls that cost a fortune to build. The water management chapter of this book was written for these streets.

Every neighborhood has its pattern. A mason who's worked Dallas for decades reads the street before he reads the wall. When you're hiring, ask him what he sees on your street. If he's got an answer, he's local. If he doesn't, he's just visiting.

Chapter 15: Hiring a Masonry Contractor in Dallas

Dallas has a lot of masons, and they are not all the same. Here's how to hire the right one — the Dallas-specific version of a process that works everywhere.

Hire a mason, not a handyman. Repointing, chimney work, lintel replacement, brick replacement — this is masonry. A handyman with a bag of mortar mix is how walls get ruined. Ask what percentage of his work is masonry. If it's not most of it, keep looking.

Ask for the decade test. Tell him the age and neighborhood of your house and listen. "1928 Tudor in Lakewood" should trigger a conversation about lime mortar and soft brick. "1979 veneer ranch in North Dallas" should trigger a conversation about chimney mortar and lintel rust. If he doesn't adjust his thinking to your house, he has one approach for every wall, and that's wrong.

Get three bids, in writing, with numbers. Scope in square feet. Cut depth on repointing. Mortar type and matching method. Access plan. Protection and cleanup. Schedule. Price.

Payment terms. Warranty. The pilot book's bid-reading chapter covers this in full — the short version is that a bid without numbers is a wish, not a bid.

Check the local references. Ask for addresses of recent jobs you can drive by — not photos, addresses. Dallas is big; a mason who's worked your neighborhood has neighbors who've seen his work. Drive by. Look at the mortar joints from the curb. Good repointing is invisible. Bad repointing announces itself.

Verify insurance. This is non-negotiable, especially for chimney and second-story work. A mason on your roof without insurance is your liability.

Beware the Dallas-specific pitches. The traveling "we're doing your neighbor's chimney" crew that knocks on doors after hail season. The waterproofing spray pitch instead of repointing. The too-cheap bid that's missing cut depth, matching method, or cleanup. The cash price with no paperwork. Dallas's storm seasons bring out the storm chasers — in roofing and in masonry. A local mason with a local address and local references is worth a premium over a truck with out-of-state plates.

Payment. Never the full amount upfront. A deposit for materials is normal. The balance on completion, after you've walked the work. Get the warranty in writing — what's covered, for how long, what's excluded.

If you want a straight bid from people who do [brick repair in Dallas] (<https://championbrickrepair.com>) every day — repointing, chimneys, lintels, the full Dallas catalog — that's what we do at Champion Brick Repair. And if you want to keep learning first, my [free brick repair books](<https://metro-foundation-repair.web.app/free-books/>) cover the rest of the trade, including the deep technical side.

Chapter 16: When It's Not the Brick —

Knowing the Lane

Half of good masonry work is knowing when the problem isn't masonry. Dallas homeowners call me about brick, and sometimes the brick is innocent. Here's how the lanes divide, so you call the right trade the first time.

Foundation. Wide or growing stair-step cracks, horizontal cracking, bulging walls, doors and windows sticking, floors sloping — that's the foundation company's lane. I'm in the foundation business too, through Metro, so I'm not guessing here: masonry repointed over active foundation movement will crack again, guaranteed. Fix the movement, then fix the mortar. Any mason who tells you otherwise is selling you a repeat job.

Roofing. Water stains on ceilings, leaks near the chimney, missing shingles — the roofer's lane, with one overlap: chimney flashing. Flashing is the DMZ between roofing and masonry, and both trades point at each other. My rule: the mason handles the brick and the counter-flashing; the roofer handles the roof and the step flashing; and somebody puts in

writing who's doing what before either one starts. The number of Dallas chimney leaks I've seen "fixed" three times by the wrong trade would make you weep.

Plumbing. Water appearing inside near exterior walls, mysteriously wet soil on one side of the house, a water bill that jumped — before you blame the brick, rule out a slab leak or a broken supply line. Water from inside the house does the same damage as water from outside, and no amount of repointing fixes a leaking pipe.

Landscaping and drainage. Negative grading, buried weep holes, downspouts dumping at the foundation, sprinklers soaking walls — the landscaper's or drainage contractor's lane, and often the actual root cause of the masonry symptom. I fix the brick, but I'll tell you straight when the brick isn't the problem.

Painters. Painted brick with moisture problems, painters offering to "seal" your brick, anyone with a sprayer and a promise — the painter's lane ends where the masonry's moisture needs begin. Breathable masonry coatings exist and have their place. Standard exterior paint on brick is a moisture trap. Know the difference before anybody sprays your walls.

The honest contractor tells you when it's not his job. That's not lost business — it's the reason the customer calls him back for the work that is his. When I walk a Dallas wall and the problem is the foundation, I say so, and I mean it. Your wall deserves the right trade, not just the trade that showed up.

Chapter 17: Questions Dallas Homeowners

Ask Me

How much does brick repair cost in Dallas? The honest 2026 answer: small repairs run a few hundred dollars. Typical jobs land between \$426 and \$3,322 in Dallas County. Repointing runs roughly \$8 to \$11 per square foot for straightforward Dallas work, more for chimneys, height, and historic matching. Chimney jobs run \$500 to \$2,500 for repointing, up to \$3,000 for crown replacement, up to \$15,000 for a full rebuild. Lintel replacement runs \$1,000 to \$3,000 per window lintel. Every one of these is a "depends on" — get three bids with real numbers.

My house was built in the 1970s and never repointed. Is it overdue? Probably. Twenty to thirty years is normal mortar life, and Dallas conditions run the clock fast. Walk the south and west walls with a screwdriver — if the mortar powders or crumbles, you're due. The chimney is almost certainly due.

Will my homeowners insurance cover brick repair? Almost never for wear and tear — and most brick repair is wear and tear. Insurance covers sudden damage: hail, fallen

trees, tornadoes, vehicle impact. If a Dallas hailstorm chipped a brick and beat up your chimney cap, that's a conversation with your adjuster. "My mortar is forty years old" is maintenance, and it's yours.

There's a stair-step crack over my garage. Do I need a foundation company or a mason? Measure it. Hairline and stable — mason, repoint it. A quarter inch or growing — foundation company first, mason after. When in doubt, the foundation check comes first. It's cheaper than repointing twice.

Should I seal my brick? Maybe, and only with a breathable masonry water repellent, and only after the mortar joints are sound. Sealer over failed joints traps water and makes everything worse. Most Dallas brick walls don't need sealer at all — they need sound joints, open weep holes, and water directed away from the wall.

Can I repoint my own chimney? I admire the spirit, and the answer is no — not safely, not well. Chimney work is high, steep, and technical, and bad repointing on a chimney is worse than none. Ground-level garden wall? Have at it. Anything above a ladder's comfortable reach? Hire it.

How do I know if my lintels are bad? Look for stair-step cracks above windows and doors, rust stains bleeding down the brick, and any sagging or bowing of the brick over an opening. If you see rust staining, the lintel is already talking. Get it looked at — a \$200-to-\$500 rust treatment now beats a \$3,000 replacement later.

My brick was painted by the previous owner. What now? Manage it, don't panic. Keep water away from the walls, don't add more non-breathable coatings, and watch for spalling or peeling that signals trapped moisture. Stripping paint from brick is expensive and can damage the brick — it's a last resort, not a first step.

How often should I have my chimney looked at? Once a year, in spring — after freeze season, before hail season. It takes ten minutes from the ground with binoculars: crown, cap, joints, flashing. The chimney you check yearly never surprises you.

We're buying a brick house in Dallas. What should the inspector flag? Mortar condition (especially chimney), lintel rust, stair-step cracking (and whether it's old or active), weep holes (open and above grade?), flashing at the chimney and windows, spalling brick, and grading toward the house. A

good inspector flags all of these. If yours didn't, get a mason's eyes on it before you close.

A Final Word Before You Call

Dallas brick has survived everything this city throws at it — the hundred-degree summers, the surprise freezes, the hail, the clay that never sits still — and it'll survive all of it again, as long as somebody maintains it. That somebody is you, and now you've got the map: what the weather does, what the soil does, which repairs come up and what they cost, and how to hire the job right.

Walk your walls this weekend. Screwdriver, binoculars, fifteen minutes. Check the chimney, the sun sides, the lintels, the weep holes. Write down what you find. Then call a mason who knows Dallas brick — who can tell a Lakewood Tudor from a North Dallas veneer and prices each one like it.

Your walls have been talking. Now you speak the language.

About the Author

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