

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

After World War II there was a movement in America to remove all things that were considered old and replace them with something new and modern. Changes took place that had a cumulative effect on the entire architectural environment of America's Downtowns. Original glass storefronts were removed and replaced with smaller, more economical windows and entrances. Upper facade windows were removed or covered completely. Building cornices and ornaments were removed in an attempt to clean-up the old facades. Historic character and qualities were removed and replaced with new inappropriate materials. Many towns have lost many of their Main Street buildings and as a result have lost any definition of a strong Downtown character and quality.

Downtown Washington has experienced some loss of historic building stock through the years. In some cases, entire buildings have been removed and replaced with new buildings which fail to relate to the existing character of the street. Fortunately, Downtown Washington has preserved numerous buildings which help maintain the architectural and civic identity of the community.

The Downtown buildings and streetscapes along most of Main Street and Elm Street, have retained the aesthetics of a traditional main street. Brick masonry facades, ornamental metalwork, planters, and historic period streetlights are a few of the elements which contribute to the charm of Downtown Washington. Many other streets, including Jefferson and Front Streets have individual buildings and urban design elements which help define the identity of the Downtown area.

The building design guidelines were developed to assist property owners and civic leaders in preserving the character of Downtown Washington. The guidelines are a resource for new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings. The DREAM Initiative building design and streetscape guidelines supplement existing guidelines developed, by Winter and Company in May 1990 for the City of Washington, Missouri.