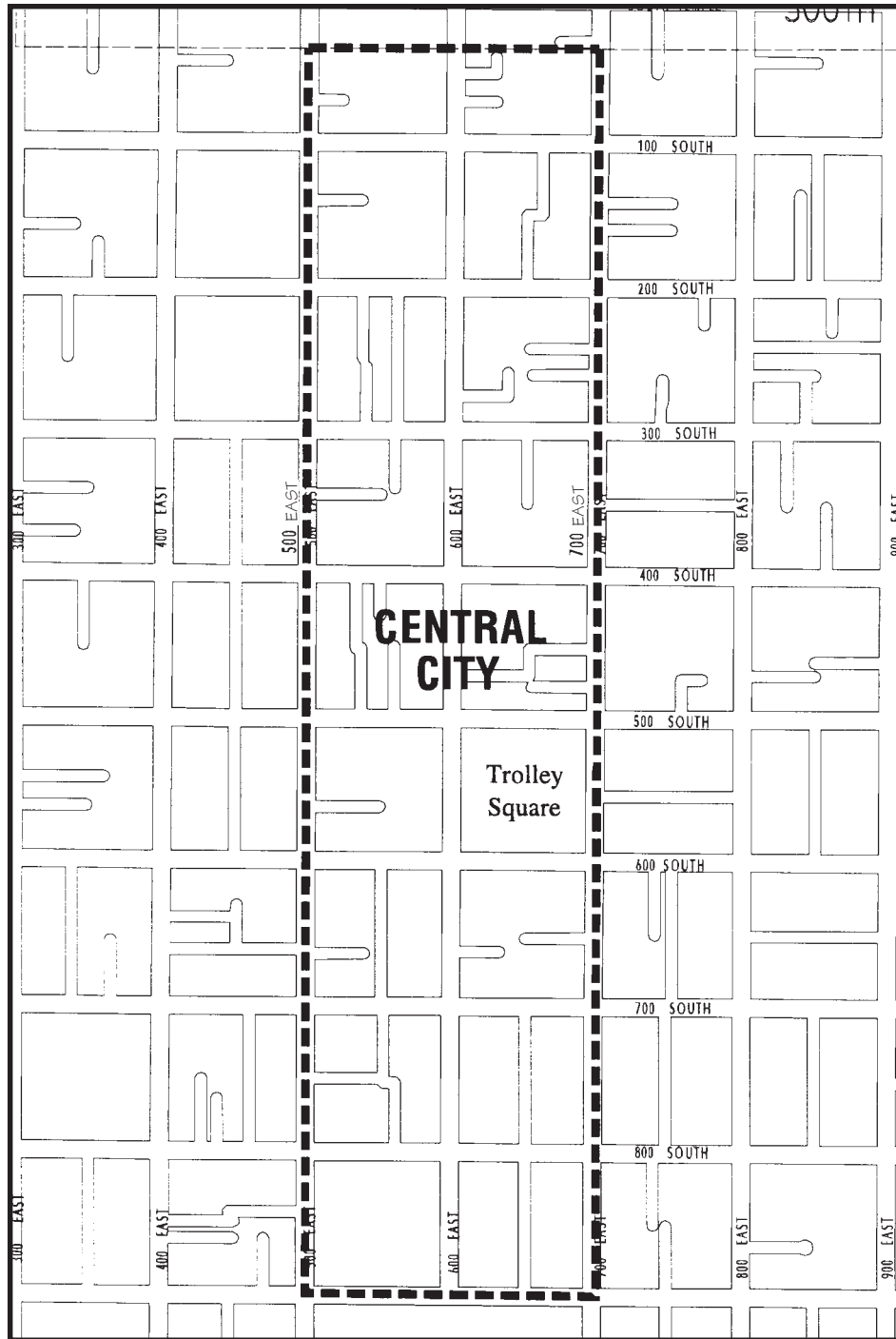


Design Standards for the Central City Historic District





CENTRAL CITY

Historic District

Scale: 1" = 100'

Previous page: A 1909 view looking north from 1st South up 7th East.

CENTRAL CITY

Encompassing one of the oldest neighborhoods of the city, the Central City Historic District is part of a larger area, known by the same name, that is associated with the original plan of Salt Lake. Out of all of the requirements outlined by Joseph Smith's "Plat for the City of Zion" only the size of the blocks — ten acres — remains intact, and what was once a village and agricultural landscape now reflects the fact that Central City has the most complex zoning and land-use patterns in Salt Lake. Although a few adobe vernacular homes still exist, the commercial development, including fast-food restaurants, office buildings and retail centers, belies its early history. But despite recent, incompatible intrusions, Central City has the most eclectic mix of historic architecture in Salt Lake, including several unique examples of a variety of building types.

Central City began to lose its early appearance and social structure with the building of the railroad and later the opening of the Bingham copper mine. These developments created a demand for unskilled workers who needed affordable places to live. In addition, Central City's proximity to the expanding downtown business district and nearby manufacturing and processing plants attracted clerks, laborers and craftspeople, so that early on it became known as a neighborhood for the working lower- and middle-class. With the exception of imposing residences at the north end of the district, Central City never became a fashionable neighborhood and the population was unstable. As the Central/Southern area survey states, "Workers moved on to other jobs, to other towns; more prosperous families were attracted to the benches, where the air was cleaner, and to new subdivisions."

Given these demographics, rental housing has proliferated and much of the housing stock has always been modest. Thomas Newton was typical of the nineteenth-century Central City resident, as was his house. Newton worked as a clerk and shoemaker for Z.C.M.I. and constructed a small, side-gabled house in 1888 at 326 South 700 East. With its side-gabled massing and simple two-over-two windows, this house exhibited the simple forms of early Utah architecture, as well as illustrating how long such forms remained popular. This property was demolished and is now a parking lot.

Central City also has an extensive stock of "Victorian Eclectic" architecture. Several examples can be seen along 600 E. between 600 and 800 S. Although not as popular for Central City's small houses, the exuberant Queen Anne style was also used. Victorian styles continued to be built until the turn of the century but were quickly replaced by the bungalow, which by 1915 had become the small house of choice. Because the bungalow was more of a type rather than a style, this architectural form also lent itself well to many variations.

The transient nature of Central City's population encouraged the construction of many rental units, including duplexes, fourplexes and multi-unit apartment buildings. Because of their small size, duplexes took on the style of whatever was popular at the time; and thus late Victorian, Craftsman, and Tudor Revival examples can be found. Apartment buildings, on the other hand, developed as their own form: the walk-up flat type used before 1918, and the "double-loaded corridor" introduced later. Central City also has several apartment types that are very unusual, such as one-story courtyard structures, and the only remaining example of Victorian row housing left in Salt Lake.

But Central City was not only home to working-class citizens and not all of the buildings are unassuming or were built as rentals. Professionals, businessmen and politicians lived in Central City, many residing in the neighborhood for decades. Frederick Albert Hale, a Cornell-educated architect, lived on 600 East from 1905 to 1934. He was one of the state's finest architects, designing for wealthy, non-Mormon clients. His work includes the Alta Club, the First Methodist Church and the Salt Lake Public Library (now the Hansen Planetarium). Several lawyers and executives associated with the mining industry lived in the north end of the district. Politicians included Utah's fourth governor, Simon Bamberger who lived at 623 E. 100 S. and more recently, Palmer dePaulis, mayor from 1986 to 1992.

Similarly, not all of the buildings are modest. Mansions include Francis Armstrong's, at 679 E. 100 S., and Orange Salisbury's, designed by Frederick Hale, at 574 E. 100 S. Within the historic period affluent families built residences as four-squares, or in the Victorian Eclectic and Queen Anne styles.

Almost all of the buildings in Central City constructed before 1945 are residential. Exceptions include the Swedish Baptist Church, constructed in 1913, and the Twelfth Ward Chapel, built in 1939. The Swedish Baptist Church is Craftsman in style, and blends in well with the surrounding homes at 823 S. 600 E. The L.D.S. chapel is an unusual example of Art Moderne for this building type, and is located at 630 E. 100 S. There are several small grocery stores scattered throughout the district, but the most impressive nonresidential structure is Trolley Square. Built as trolley barns for the Utah Electric and Railway Corporation from 1908 to 1910, the barns were renovated as a shopping and entertainment complex in the early 1970s.

Because of its early layout, large blocks and role as "the inner city," Central City has always been beset by land-use conflicts. The large blocks led to haphazard development as early as 1900 and were subject to incompatible development by insensitive zoning and an encroaching downtown. Central City has been subject to the problems associated with absentee ownership for decades. Fourth South developed as a commercial corridor after World War II and is now a busy street that is inhospitable to pedestrians.

But the City and residents have, if periodically, made attempts to improve Central City. One effort, still intact, was the creation of “parkings,” or grass medians, down several streets, including 600 East, as part of the removal of electrical wires and poles moved from the center of the street to accommodate the new street car system. In response to the deteriorating conditions of many houses because of foreclosures during the Depression, the first neighborhood beautification program was organized in the 1930s. Local resident Sheldon Brewster headed up the campaign to influence people to buy homes in the area and maintain them. In 1932 an organization called “the Central Civic Beautification League” fought an uphill battle to “turn the tide of decay and stultification back.” This group concentrated its efforts on keeping business out of residential areas, soliciting money for structural repair and attempting to instill a sense of community in the neighborhood. Most recently, neighborhood residents have been renovating structures, and petitioned the City to adopt part of Central City as a local historic district. This was accomplished in 1991.



Trolley Square under construction for use in the Central City Historic District.

CENTRAL CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Development trends:

The district has experienced a surge of renovation and improvements to properties. Continued investment is expected, particularly in rehabilitation. However, some new infill construction also is anticipated.

Goals for the district:

The most significant feature of this district is its overall scale and simple character of buildings as a group, as a part of the streetscape. As a result, the primary goal is to preserve the general, modest character of each block as a whole, as seen from the street. Because the overall street character is the greatest concern, more flexibility in other areas, particularly renovation details should be allowed. This goal for preservation also must be considered in the context of related neighborhood goals to attract investment and promote affordability.

DESIGN CHARACTER

The following is a brief discussion of features that contribute to the design character of the district.

Streetscape features

Street pattern

The Central City district developed on a rectilinear plan, with spacious blocks intersected by wide streets. Sidewalks are detached and street trees are located in the tree lawn in many cases. Street widths vary widely, ranging from a boulevard along Sixth East Street to short, narrow alleys and lanes.

Site features

Front setback of primary structure

Although a variety in setbacks is seen throughout the district, most buildings within a block appear to align along their front setbacks, within a narrow range of dimensions. Historically, larger buildings in the district, such as apartment buildings, were set back farther away from the street than the single structures. In some cases, small dwellings sit at the edge of the sidewalk, causing a very urban feel. This is particularly evident along Park Street, which has the character of a developed lane or alley. These traditional setbacks should be maintained.

DESIGN CHARACTER, continued...

Porches

A clear definition of the entry to each building is one of the most significant character-defining elements in the district. In a typical situation, the primary entrance faces the street and is sheltered with a porch. Where historic porches exist, they should be preserved. They also are strongly encouraged as a feature in new construction.

Landscape features

Fences

Many of Central City's yards are bounded by fences. Historically, materials were wood and metal. The use of wood, iron and wire fences is preferred, as they are more in character with the neighborhood.

Commercial Area Features

While most of the district retains a traditional residential character, some major commercial streets bisect the neighborhood in an east-west direction. These have redeveloped recently with commercial uses in auto-oriented designs and as a result, no historic context exists there.

Franchise facilities appear frequently along the cross streets. Most of these are set back substantially from the street, with large parking areas located in front. Large signs are often mounted on tall poles and landscaping is used sparsely. Curb cuts appear frequently and extensive portions of most sites are paved with hard surfaces. The result is that these areas offer little to pedestrians, in contrast to the pedestrian-friendly character of the historic residential streets in the district. When viewed from within the more intact residential portions of the district, these commercial zones are visually disruptive.

The design goal for these commercial areas is to enhance the pedestrian environment and to minimize negative visual impacts as seen from the historic residential portions of the district. It is not the intent to create a "historical" image for buildings in these areas, but simply to apply principles of good urban design that will enhance the visual quality while accepting the "contemporary" character that exists here.



Many of Central City's yards are bounded by fences.

DESIGN CHARACTER, continued...

Characteristics of the Central City Historic District.

The following is a summary of key features of the neighborhood.

- Large, ten-acre blocks are located north of 600 South.
- Residential, interior block development exists south of 600 South. Streets such as Green, Park and Lowell are several interior streets that are very narrow, from 15' to 25' wide. The lots are typically about 2,500 square feet, setbacks about 10'.
- Garages are set at the rear of the lot and are accessed by alleys.
- Grass medians run the length of the district from Liberty Park to South Temple.
- Architectural styles range from the 1870s to the contemporary. "High-style" examples are generally located north of 400 South. Smaller, more modest homes are located in the southern portion of the district.
- Fourth South is totally commercial, and has no remaining historic structures.
- The center of several of the large blocks north of 400 South are vacant.

Specific design standards that respond to the design character of the neighborhood follow on the next page.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR CENTRAL CITY

Streetscape Standards

13.21 Maintain the character and scale of the side streets in the district.

Many side streets, particularly the lanes, have a distinct character and scale that should be preserved.

13.22 Maintain alleys where they exist.

Their modest character should be preserved.

Site design Standards

Setback

13.23 Maintain the established alignment of building fronts in the block.

In general, larger, taller masses should be set back farther from the front than smaller structures. In some cases, therefore, a setback that is greater than the median setback may be appropriate.

13.24 Maintain the rhythm established by uniform setbacks in the block.

It is particularly important that the traditional spacing pattern be maintained as seen from the street. Follow the traditional building pattern in order to maintain the historic character of the street. Consider the visual impact of new construction and additions on neighbors along side yards. Consider varying the height and setback of the structure along the side yard.



The uniform setback of these vernacular structures provides a sense of alignment and the porches provide a consistent orientation to the street.

The design standards apply in addition to those in relevant preceding chapters, which may include Rehabilitation Standards, Standards for New Construction and General Design Standards. See the matrix on page 4 to determine which chapters apply.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR CENTRAL CITY, continued...

Primary entrance

13.25 Clearly define the primary entrance to the house.

Use a porch, stoop, portico or similar one-story feature to indicate the entry. Orienting the entry to the street is preferred. Establishing a “progression” of entry elements, including walkway, landscape elements and porch also is encouraged.



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Additions/Alterations

13.26 Plan an addition to be in character with the main building, in terms of its size, scale and appearance.

This is especially important in portions of the district where buildings are modest in size and scale and have limited architectural detailing. Greater flexibility is appropriate, in terms of size of additions, on the northern edge of the district near South Temple Street, where many of the historic buildings are quite large.

Architectural Standards

Building mass

13.27 Design new buildings to appear similar in mass to those that were typical historically in the district.

If a building would be larger than those seen on the block, subdivide larger masses of the building into smaller “modules” that are similar in size to buildings seen traditionally.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR CENTRAL CITY, continued...***Building Scale*****13.28 Design new buildings so that they appear similar in scale to those seen traditionally on the block.**

Historically, most houses appeared to have a height of one, one-and-one-half or two stories. A new front facade should appear similar in height to those seen historically in the block. Taller portions should be set back farther on the lot. Story heights should appear similar to those seen historically. Also, consider using architectural details to give a sense of the traditional scale of the block.

Building form**13.29 Design a new building to have a form similar to those seen historically.**

In most cases, the primary form of the house was a simple rectangle. In some styles, smaller, subordinate masses were then attached to this primary form.

Building materials**13.30 Use primary building materials that will appear similar to those used historically.**

Appropriate building materials include: brick, stucco, and painted wood. Substitute materials may be considered under some circumstances. See Sections 2.0 and 6.0 and page 126.



Use building materials that will appear similar to those used historically.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR CENTRAL CITY, continued...

Commercial Area Standards

13.31 Minimize the visual impacts of automobiles as seen from the sidewalk by pedestrians.

Provide landscaped buffer areas to screen and separate the sidewalk from parking and drive lanes within individual commercial sites.

13.32 Screen service areas from the residential portions of the historic district.

Use fences, walls and planting materials to screen service areas. When feasible, locate service areas away from residential portions of the historic district.

13.33 Minimize the visual impacts of signs.

This is particularly important as seen from within the residential portions of the historic district. Smaller signs are preferred. Monument signs and low pole-mounted signs are appropriate.

13.34 Shield all site lighting such that it does not spill over into residential portions of the historic district.