

## **Design Standards for the University Historic District**





**THE UNIVERSITY**  
**Historic District**

**Scale: 1" = 1000'**

*Previous page: Despite modern intrusions and the mix of single-family dwellings and apartment buildings, the University Historic District exhibits the most homogenous blend of architecture and consistent streetscape of all the local districts. A progression of entry features seen here includes a walkway with steps leading to a broad front porch.*

## UNIVERSITY

Despite modern intrusions and the mix of single-family dwellings and apartment buildings, the University Historic District exhibits the most homogenous blend of architecture and consistent streetscape of all the local districts. Although several homes remain that were built as early as 1885, for the most part its development coincided with the first two decades of this century — a period marked by prosperity and growth. Municipal improvements, such as the installation of utilities and the extension of electric streetcar lines throughout the city created new opportunities for suburban expansion, especially on the east bench. Obviously the establishment of the University of Utah at its current location in 1901 ensured the viability of this neighborhood and influenced its development. Since that time the area has been home to many university faculty and staff members, although the area was not popular for student residency until after World War II. Many professional people not affiliated with the University have also resided in the neighborhood.

The affluence of its residents, its comparatively orderly development and the influence of the Progressive era are all reflected in the district's architecture and streetscapes. Four-square architecture, also known as the "box," was another popular choice during this time and is well-represented in the University District. Some have Colonial Revival details, such as Doric porch columns, but examples in this neighborhood are generally Prairie School in style. Many are scattered throughout the district, but several of the most appealing are clustered along 100 South between 1200 E. and Douglas Street. At least two of these were designed by the local firm of Ware and Treganza and represent the firm's earliest work in the Prairie style. While not as elaborate as the mansions along South Temple that were built for similarly wealthy and prominent citizens, many of the homes in the University district were beautifully fitted and very comfortable.

The majority of the existing construction occurred after 1900, but this district contains many structures built before this time that exhibit the asymmetrical, vertical and multi-textured surface treatment associated with Victorian-era styles. Shingle style houses and Victorian Eclectic examples exist throughout the district. The Hudson Smith house at 221 S. 1200 E., built in 1896, was apparently an ornate Victorian with plenty of surface decoration. However, when subsequent owners, Seibert and Emily Mote purchased it in 1930, they undertook an extensive remodeling to make the house look "old." Their attempts reflect the popular revival of federal and Georgian styles in the 1920s and 1930s and resulted in a unique blend of the Federal and Shingle styles.



*During the beginning of the twentieth century, the bungalow proved to be a very popular building form in the University district.*

The few pre-1900 structures are most prevalent near the western and northern boundaries of the neighborhood. Not everyone who resided in the neighborhood was affluent, professional or associated with the University of Utah. A look at city directories indicates that government clerks, railroad workers and tradesmen lived on Bueno Avenue, a street lined with similar frame and brick cottages that were constructed about 1905. Speculative development undertaken by real estate companies, similar to that erected by the Anderson Real Estate firm in Central City, also occurred near the University.

The University district also has a small but lively commercial area on the six blocks between 200 and 400 S. and University and 1300 E. Streets. No business building is higher than two stories and few are from the historic period. Exceptions include several four-square residences that now house small businesses and the old Crystal Palace Market, built in 1930. Fire station number eight was converted into a restaurant, but has maintained much of its original character. It was designed by the City Engineer's office in the Period Revival style: a conscious attempt by Salt Lake City Corporation to ensure that this institutional structure was compatible with its residential surroundings.



*"Victorian Eclectic", a loose but apt description, was the most popular style used in the first wave of building after about 1885.*

As in all of the historic districts, more recent, incompatible architecture has detracted from the visual unity of the streetscape. Because of their low massing and because of zoning restrictions commercial structures are not the problem; instead multifamily structures represent the most disruptive intrusions. Nineteen-sixties era apartment buildings, known as “box-cars” because of their long narrow shape with an orientation away from the street, are scattered in the neighborhood and a condominium project, University Gardens, towers over its surroundings on 1300 East. It should be pointed out, however, that several earlier apartment buildings contribute architecturally to the district, such as the Commander Apartments across the street that were built in 1928.

Within the last decade more interest has been shown in maintaining the historic streetscape and integrity of the University neighborhood. These efforts resulted in a successful request to the City to create a local district requiring design review, and in the rewriting of the zoning ordinance in 1994 that reduced permitted densities in the neighborhood.

## ***THE UNIVERSITY HISTORIC DISTRICT***

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### **Development trends:**

Known for its ongoing preservation efforts, the University District is experiencing continued investment in the area, including renovation, additions to existing buildings and infill construction. A wide range of construction projects is therefore anticipated, including renovation and new buildings.

### **Goals for the district:**

The design goal for the University District is to preserve the character of its streetscapes and the integrity of its individual historic structures. In particular, preservation of the streetscape, including parkways, tree lawns, front yards and walkways is a high priority.

## ***DESIGN CHARACTER***

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

### **Streetscape Features**

#### ***Street pattern***

The University district developed according to a grid system, which is characterized by wide streets and large blocks. Sidewalks are detached with a planting strip between the sidewalk and the curb. Narrow lanes with small cottages sometimes occur, contrasting with the broader streets. This traditional rectilinear pattern, along with a uniformity of siting and somewhat homogeneous housing stock, created the district's distinct continuity of the streetscape. Preservation of this street pattern is a high priority.

#### ***Alleys***

A system of alleys provides a contrast to the wide, formal streets and large blocks on the University district. Aside from creating visual diversity in the neighborhood, alleys are functional spaces that relieve traffic on larger streets and provide access to parking and service areas. Thus, the historic character of alleys should be maintained.

***DESIGN CHARACTER, continued...***

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**Building form**

The University district consists primarily of turn of the century residential structures, which are generally similar in mass and scale. However, a commercial area along East and University Street and various apartment buildings exhibit slightly larger building massing. Nonetheless, these structures generally conform to a consistent, relatively low neighborhood scale. This character of the district provides a context with which to relate new infill.

***Roof materials***

Due to the relative architectural homogeneity of the district, the range of historic roof materials is narrow. This similarity of materials should be maintained.

***Porches***

Because of the number of early twentieth century residences, including period revival houses and craftsman bungalows, the streetscape is unified by the strong presence of porches. In fact, the bungalow was customarily designed with a spacious front porch, usually accented by features such as wide, stone piers and brackets. Where historic porches exist, they should be preserved. They also are strongly encouraged in new construction.

***DESIGN CHARACTER, continued...***

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**Characteristics of the University Historic District**

The following is a summary of key features of the district that should be respected.

- Setbacks are uniform.
- Garages are set back on the lot and are detached from the house. They are almost all accessed by single-car driveways from the streets; however, alleys bisect the north/south streets.
- There is a substantial variation in topography. Rather than address this through the architecture, it historically was addressed through site features such as retaining walls. The materials of the walls vary and include cobblestone, sandstone, and concrete. Yards often have steep slopes.
- The street pattern is one of a grid. Lot size is uniform, although Bueno, Alameda and some blocks of Elizabeth Street have smaller lots, increasing the density.
- The small stores, restaurants and businesses along 1300 East and University streets provide a neighborhood commercial center unusual in Salt Lake because of their pedestrian orientation. Parking is generally only available on the street. Many of the businesses are located in former homes, and thus are of a scale compatible to the district's residential character.
- The large retaining wall and corresponding street pattern on 200 South and 1200 East is a unique feature to the neighborhood. Nearby stairs provide pedestrian access between these two streets.

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

## **DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT**

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### **Streetscape Standards**

#### **13.48 Maintain alleys where they exist.**

Preserve their simple character.

#### **13.49 Maintain the established pattern of on-street parking.**

### **Architectural Standards**

#### ***Building mass***

#### **13.50 Design a new building to be similar in mass to those that were typical historically in the district.**

Subdivide a larger mass into smaller “modules” that are similar in size to buildings seen traditionally. Where a new commercial structure is to be constructed adjacent to a residential area, step the building down in height to minimize impact on the residences.

#### ***Building Scale***

#### **13.51 Design a new building to be 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 facades 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. Use architectural details similar in size and proportion to those seen traditionally to give a sense of scale.

#### ***Building form***

#### **13.52 Design a new building to have a primary form similar to those seen historically.**

Since there is such a high concentration of bungalows in the University district, the primary form of the house was a single rectangular volume. In some styles, smaller, subordinate masses were then attached to this primary form. New buildings should continue this tradition.

*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 THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT, continued...**

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***Roof form and Roof scale***

**13.53 A new roof should appear similar in form and scale to those of typical houses seen historically in the block.**

Pitched roofs, either hip or gable, are preferred. Slopes should be within the range of those seen historically in the block. The depth of the overhang of the eaves should also follow historic precedent. This is especially important on bungalows, where the overhang is fairly deep.

***Building materials***

**13.54 Use building materials that appear similar to those seen historically.**

Appropriate building materials include: brick, stucco, and wood. Because of the large number of bungalows in the district, many foundations and posts are constructed of stone. Using stone, similar to that employed historically, also is preferred. Using field stone, veneers applied with the bedding plane in a vertical position, or aluminum or vinyl siding are inappropriate.

**13.55 Use roofing materials that are similar in appearance to those seen historically.**

Asphalt and wood shingles are appropriate. Concrete tiles also are appropriate because they convey a scale and texture similar to materials employed historically. Large panelized products, such as standing seam metal, should be avoided. Colors should be muted; the overall texture of a roof should be consistent throughout the building.

***Porches***

**13.56 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.



*Roof pitches may vary from block to block. The roof on this Tudor Revival house is very steep.*