
1. Site Features

Context & Character

Site features and plantings are important elements that provide a context and setting for a historic building. The relationships between buildings, walkways, landscape features and open space together contribute to the distinctive character of a property and neighborhood. They also add variety in scale, texture and materials to the street scene, enhancing the public experience.

In its early years, downtown Salt Lake City originally had streets and sidewalks of dirt which were both dusty and muddy depending on the weather. As the City grew, sidewalks of wood planks were added and these in turn were replaced by brick and concrete sidewalks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most commercial buildings were constructed directly adjacent to the public sidewalk, resulting in little need for retaining walls or similar features.

Commercial buildings in Salt Lake City's historic residential areas were designed to be as open, inviting, and as accessible as possible. As a result, there are few instances of historic fence materials or retaining walls in front of these buildings. However, many were built, or were later enhanced, with broad concrete sidewalks or concrete extending the width of the storefront. Potential customers could consequently avoid the dirt and mud and experience a more pleasant shopping experience. Many of the neighborhood commercial and corner commercial buildings in areas such as Capitol Hill and the Avenues retain their early- to mid-20th century concrete walkways.

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DESIGN OBJECTIVE	1 : 2
GENERAL	1 : 2



South Temple is a mature boulevard notable for its large older shade trees.



Retaining walls in front of commercial buildings such as this example at 445 E. South Temple Street provide interest to the street frontage.



Historic wrought or cast iron fences provide visual richness and contribute to the unique character of the street scene.

Store owners also added landscape features such as planter boxes, at the front of their buildings, and in the park strips between the sidewalk and street. While most historic plant materials have been replaced over time, the use of native plants as well as traditional planting patterns should be utilized when planning new landscape treatments for historic commercial buildings.

The South Temple Historic District is particularly characterized by its long avenue of mature street trees. These trees add greatly to the character of the district and are an important historic element of the streetscape. This district also contains a large number of commercial buildings from the 1940s and 1950s that were designed with landscaped front yards and concrete walkways. Several also have low masonry retaining walls adjacent to the sidewalk.

Design Objective

Historic site features, as an integral part of the original development pattern, should be retained as part of the street scene. New site features should be compatible with their context and reinforce the historic character of the neighborhood.

General

1.1 Historically significant site features should be preserved and maintained.

- This can include original site features such as fencing, retaining walls and driveways.
- Grading profiles and designs in front of commercial buildings should be retained where they are a historic characteristic.
- Repair masonry retaining walls, walkways and drive strips using compatible mortar mixes and materials.

1.2 Historically significant planting designs and hardscape features, which are part of the traditional setting of a property, should be maintained.

- The historic progression of spaces between the street and the building, including mature trees, sidewalks, walkways and planting strips, should be maintained.

1.3 New site features should be designed to recognize and strengthen the sense of visual continuity and cohesiveness on a block.

- Design a wall to reflect those found traditionally.
- Design new landscaping to integrate with existing mature planting.
- Select indigenous plants suitable to the climate.

1.4 A new fence should be similar in character with those seen historically.

- A fence that defines a front yard or a side yard on a corner lot should have a 'transparent quality'.
- Consider using a lower height fence (less than three feet) in the front yard, so as to maintain the relationship between the individual building and the streetscape.
- New fence designs and quality materials that are similar to those used historically are appropriate.

1.5 An outdoor dining area should be compatible with the character of the building and streetscape.

- The materials, finishes, colors and other character-defining elements of furniture, fences, lighting and plantings should complement the storefront.



Outdoor activities enhance the pedestrian experience.