

15. Capitol Hill

The Capitol Hill Historic District lays claim to being the City's most distinctive neighborhood. Its steep and varying topography demands construction features such as high foundations and retaining walls. Blocks are oddly shaped, street patterns are unpredictable and dwellings are haphazardly oriented to the street. In both layout and architecture Capitol Hill is highly eclectic, with a continuum of building styles and types that span early settlement to the present.

During the 1880s when water became more widely available in the Capitol Hill area, development intensified and, for the first time, was carried out in an orderly manner. The earliest lots had been arranged haphazardly along the hills. During the rapid growth of the 1880s, standard rectangles were laid out. As a result, the orientation of houses changed from facing the hillside, regardless of relationship to the street, to being parallel to the street. This is one source of today's interesting Capitol Hill streetscapes.

In addition to the various residential buildings, a number of brick and frame commercial buildings were also constructed in the neighborhood. Most of these were one-part commercial blocks with large storefronts and detailing on the upper facade such as corbelled brick cornices. Businesses in these buildings provided groceries, restaurants, and other services for the neighborhood. These types of commercial buildings are scattered throughout the Capitol Hill Historic District and continue to be used for restaurants and other businesses.



A good example of a one-part commercial block is the building at 361 N Main Street (ca. 1919).



The building at 736 North 300 West is an example of the commercial buildings that continued to be constructed into the 1940s.

The Capitol Hill neighborhood was also served by a neighborhood shopping area along 300 West. A series of one-story brick commercial buildings were built along this busy street in the early 20th century and provided a cluster of businesses to serve the neighborhood. In addition to stores such as groceries and hardware stores, clothing stores and other retail specialty shops were located along several blocks of this street on the western edge of the district.