

5. Architectural Details

Context & Character

Architectural details are essential to historic character, defining building styles, exhibiting design and craftsmanship and adding visual interest. Architectural details can include columns, pilasters, window hoods and surrounds, brackets, cornices, windows, decorative panels and other ornamentation. A variety of finishes and materials, including brick, stone, concrete, metal and tile, are used to provide unique features to individual buildings. Character-defining features of historic buildings collectively contribute to the design vitality, human scale and visual continuity of a street scene. Refer to Chapter 3 for appropriate repair of materials and methods.

Design Objective

As important stylistic elements of a building's character, preserve and maintain historic architectural details and features. Avoid removing or concealing historic architectural details. If repair or replacement is necessary, match replacements to the original as closely as possible in material, design, color and texture.

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Architectural details help to define the distinctive visual character of this historic building at 145 S. State Street.



Architectural details exhibit craftsmanship and help convey the unique character of the Felt Building at 341 S. Main Street.



Decorative keystone of the Commercial Club Building at 32 Exchange Place.



Molded terra-cotta rosettes adorn the facade of the Kearns Building at 136 S. Main Street.

General

5.1 Traditional architectural details and features should be retained and maintained.

- Proper care and maintenance will help to ensure the integrity and longevity of historic features.
- Avoid the removal or concealment of original architectural features to prevent undermining a building's overall historic character.
- It may be necessary to consult with a historic architect, architectural conservator or experienced contractor to determine the appropriate treatment.

5.2 Architectural details and features should only be cleaned when necessary in order to prolong their lifespan.

- In general, water, mild detergent and brushes are appropriate cleaning tools.

5.3 When repairing deteriorated or damaged historic architectural features, retain their historic appearance and as much of the building's historic material as possible.

- For decaying wood, it is appropriate to apply epoxy to strengthen damaged areas and fill in small openings.
- For large areas of decay, cutting out damaged areas and piecing-in new wood into the gap are appropriate.
- For light metal corrosion, hand scraping, hand chipping and use of a wire brush are appropriate ways to remove rust and damaged paint.
- With heavy corrosion on architectural metals, alternative methods include low pressure grit or sand blasting, flame cleaning, and chemical treatment.
- Adjacent materials such as masonry, glass, and wood should be covered during grit or sand blasting for their protection.
- Metal pieces should be painted or sealed immediately following rust and paint removal. Epoxies may be used to fill small gaps.



Orpheum Theatre (Promised Valley Playhouse), 132 S. State Street.



Decorative embellishment plays a significant role in the facade composition of the Alta Club at 100 E. South Temple Street.



Classical adornment at the Salt Lake Stock and Mining Exchange, 39 Exchange Place.



Cornices and balustrade add classical detailing to the street facade at 151 S. Main Street.



An ornate cornice crowns the Herald Building at 169 S. Main Street.

5.4 Missing or severely damaged historic architectural details and features should be replaced with examples that replicate the original.

- Replacements to the original should match in design, proportion, and detail.
- Original features may be documented through photographs, drawings, graphics, or physical evidence.
- Where no such evidence exists, a simple design in keeping with the building's historic architectural style and period is appropriate.
- Replication with the same material is encouraged.
- Substitute materials may be considered if:
 - They successfully match the original detail appearance.
 - Are not readily visible from the street, such as along upper facades and cornices.
 - Have an established record for durability and weathering.
 - They are installed in a manner that tolerates differences in physical properties between materials.

5.5 Adding architectural features to buildings where none historically existed will adversely affect historic integrity and should be avoided.

Cornices & Parapets

Cornices and parapets are important character-defining elements of historic buildings and are usually associated with a particular architectural style. Historic commercial buildings typically have a cornice at the top of the building and often to signify an upper level floor. Parapets finish the top of a wall shielding flat roofs and rooftop mechanical equipment systems from view; both also provide building decoration. A cornice or parapet may be constructed from a variety of materials, including stone, brick, cast masonry, stucco, terra-cotta, wood or metal. Their different configurations, details, materials and colors all enrich the character of a building facade.

5.6 A historic cornice or parapet should be preserved and maintained.

5.7 Removing, concealing or covering original cornices or parapets with modern materials should be avoided.

5.8 When replacing a missing cornice or parapet, the replacement should match the original in style, materials, size, and design.

- In cases where the original cornice or parapet is missing, the installation of a new cornice or parapet, based on physical or pictorial evidence of the original design, is encouraged.
- If no historical, physical and/or pictorial evidence exists for a particular building, new cornices may be of a design that is compatible in style, size, scale, and materials.

5.9 Adding cornices or parapets to a building should be avoided if the building appears to have never had such a feature.

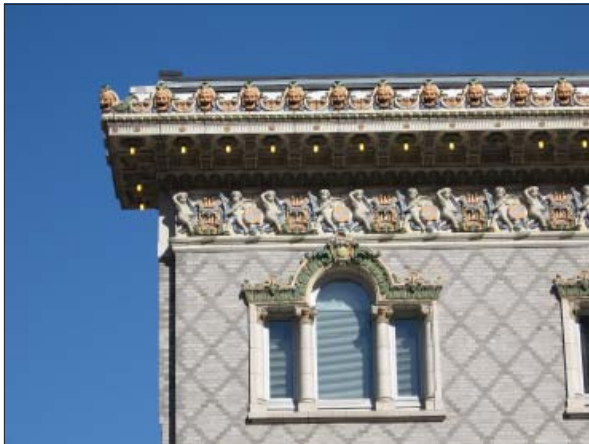
- This will detract from the building's integrity.



Salt Lake City commercial buildings offer a wide variety of cornice styles and materials, each helping to create the distinct character and identity of the building.



Broadway Hotel, 222 West 300 South.



Architectural details of the Capitol Theatre include an ornate cornice and decorative window hoods and surrounds.

5.10 A plan for seismically retrofitting a historic cornice or parapet should be developed.

- A historic cornice can be secured by installing a continuous horizontal channel across its surface with pins imbedded vertically into the cornice. A steel angle brace is welded to the channel and attached with a lag bolt to the roof.
- Parapets can be stabilized or reinforced in visually unobtrusive ways along the top surface or rear side.

Additional Information

One of the best sources for historic photographs is **Utah State Historical Society**, which maintains early photographs for thousands of buildings.

archives.slco.org/recMgmt/recMgmt.html