
Chapter 11. General Design Guidelines

This section discusses design topics that may be associated with all types of projects, including those affecting historic properties as well as other work and new construction in local historic districts.

Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 mandated that all public places are to be accessible to everyone. This mandate includes historic structures that are used for commercial and multi-family uses. While all buildings must comply, alternative measures are possible when the integrity of a historic resource would be threatened. In most cases though, property owners can comply without compromising the integrity of the historic resource.

11.1 These guidelines should not prevent or inhibit compliance with laws on access.

- All new construction should comply completely with the ADA.
- Owners of historic properties should comply to the fullest extent possible, while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings.
- Special provisions for historic buildings exist in the law that allow some alternatives in meeting the ADA standards.

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Mechanical Equipment

New technologies in heating, ventilating and telecommunications have introduced mechanical equipment into historic areas where they were not seen traditionally. Satellite dishes and rooftop heating and cooling equipment are among those that may now intrude upon the visual appearance of historic districts. Wherever feasible, the visual impacts of such systems should be minimized such that the historic character is not negatively affected. Locating equipment so that it is screened from public view is the best approach.

PART II Design Guidelines

11.2 The visual impacts of mechanical equipment as seen from the public way should be minimized.

- Mechanical equipment should be screened from view.
- Ground mounted units should be screened with fences, walls, or hedges.
- Where roof top units are visible, provide screening with materials that are compatible with those of the building itself.
- Window air conditioning units should not be located on a primary facade.
- Use low-profile mechanical units on rooftops to avoid visibility from the street or alley.
- The visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes should be minimized.
- Use smaller satellite dishes, mounted low to the ground, and away from front yards, significant building facades or highly visible roof planes when feasible.
- Muted colors on telecommunications and mechanical equipment should be used to minimize appearance and blend with the background.

11.3 Locate and attach standpipes and other service equipment and pipework such that they do not damage historic facade materials.

- Cutting channels into historic facade materials damages the historic building fabric and should be avoided.
- Keep such equipment and service connections away from the primary facades wherever feasible.

Landscaping

Native and established plant materials significantly contribute to the sense of a “natural setting” that is part of the heritage in many of the historic districts. Where buildings are set back from the sidewalk, they typically have yards, walks, fences and plant materials that all contribute to the sense of open space in the community. This character should be maintained as it plays an important role in establishing a context for the historic buildings. Preserving established street trees and replacing them when necessary would be examples.

11.4 Established plantings on site should be maintained

- Established trees should be preserved on site when feasible.
- Protect established vegetation during construction to avoid damage.
- Replace damaged, aged or diseased trees.
- If street trees must be removed as part of a development, replace them with species of a large enough scale to have a visual impact in the early years of the project; refer to the City’s Urban Forester requirements.



Established landscaping in for example this street in the Avenues contributes significantly to the character, identity and residential amenity of a neighborhood.

11.5 Indigenous plant materials should be included in new landscape designs.

- Drought-tolerant varieties, that are in character with plantings used historically, are preferred
- A list of drought-tolerant plants is available from the Salt Lake City Planning Division.

11.6 The use of traditional site structures is encouraged.

- Constructing retaining walls and fences that are similar in scale, texture and finish to those used historically is appropriate.
- See also PART II, Ch.1 Site Features.

Service & Parking Areas

11.7 Minimize the visual impacts of service areas as seen from the street, wherever possible.

- Service areas should be sited away from public view, whenever feasible.
- Service areas, especially those associated with commercial and multifamily developments, should be screened from view, wherever possible. This includes locations for trash and recycling containers, and loading docks.

11.8 Large parking areas, especially those for commercial and multifamily uses, should not be visually obtrusive.

- Locate parking areas to the rear of the property, when physical conditions permit.
- An alley should serve as the primary access to parking, whenever possible.
- Parking should not be located in the front yard.

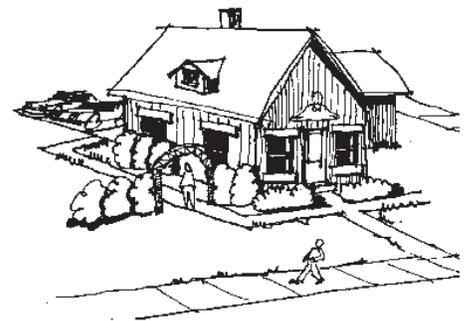
11.9 Large expanses of parking should be avoided.

- Divide large parking lots with planting areas.
- In the context of the character and scale of historic residential areas, large parking areas are those with more than five cars.

11.10 Parking areas should be screened from views from the street.

- Automobile headlight illumination from parking areas should be screened from adjacent lots and the street.
- Fences, walls, and plantings, or a combination of these, should be used to screen parking.

Locate parking areas to the rear of the property, when physical conditions permit.



Color

Color is not a matter considered in design review in Salt Lake City. It can however dramatically affect the perception of a building and its contribution to its setting.

Color schemes vary throughout the historic districts in Salt Lake City. Many are associated with individual building types and styles, while others reflect the tastes of distinct historical periods. Color in itself does not affect the actual form of a building, but it can dramatically affect the perceived scale of a structure, and it can also help to blend a building with its context. Property owners should also refer to more detailed discussions of specific color schemes associated with individual architectural styles. (PART I, Section 4, Historic Context & Architectural Styles)



A considered color scheme here complements both building and setting.

With respect to colors on a historic building, a scheme that reflects the historic style is preferred, although some new color selections can also be compatible. For a non-historic building in a historic district, a color scheme that complements the historic character of the district should be used.

Additional Information

Moss, Roger W. and Gail Caskey Winkler. *Victorian Exterior Decoration, How to Paint Your Nineteenth-Century American House Historically*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1987

<http://books.google.com/books?id=BsxfPQAACAAJ&dq=moss+%26+winkler+victorian&hl=en&sa=X&ei=CF7DUanLJ6HhygHy3IDIaw&ved=0CDoQ6AEwAg>

Schwinn III, Lawrence. *Old House Colors-An Expert's Guide to Painting Your Old (Or Not So Old) House*. New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1990

www.barnesandnoble.com/w/old-house-colors-lawrence-schwinn/1015622126

Alderson, Caroline. "Re-creating A 19th Century Paint Palette", *APT* Vol. XVI No. 1, pgs. 47-56. 1984

www.jstor.org/pss/1493914

Freeman, John Crosby. "Living Life in Colors: Paint Colors for Historic Homes", *Old House Journal*

http://www.oldhousejournal.com/living_life_in_colors/magazine/1522

Property owners are particularly encouraged to employ colors that will help establish a sense of visual continuity for the block. Several major paint companies produce a range of historical colors, often drawing from extensive research. See also the Additional Information panel at the end of this chapter.

11.11 Color schemes should be simple.

- Using one base color for the building is preferred.
- Muted colors are appropriate for the base color
- Using only one or two accent colors is also encouraged, except where precedent exists for using more than two colors with some architectural styles.
- See the discussion on Historic Context Architectural Styles.

11.12 Coordinating the entire building in one color scheme is usually more successful than working with a variety of palettes.

- Using the color scheme to establish a sense of overall composition for the building is strongly encouraged.
- A better sense of the coherence of the architectural composition is likely to be achieved.
- Where a color is used can be very important to a successful outcome. Consider a hand drawn or computer-generated 'mock-up' to judge the success of the color scheme.
- Assess the impact upon adjacent buildings.