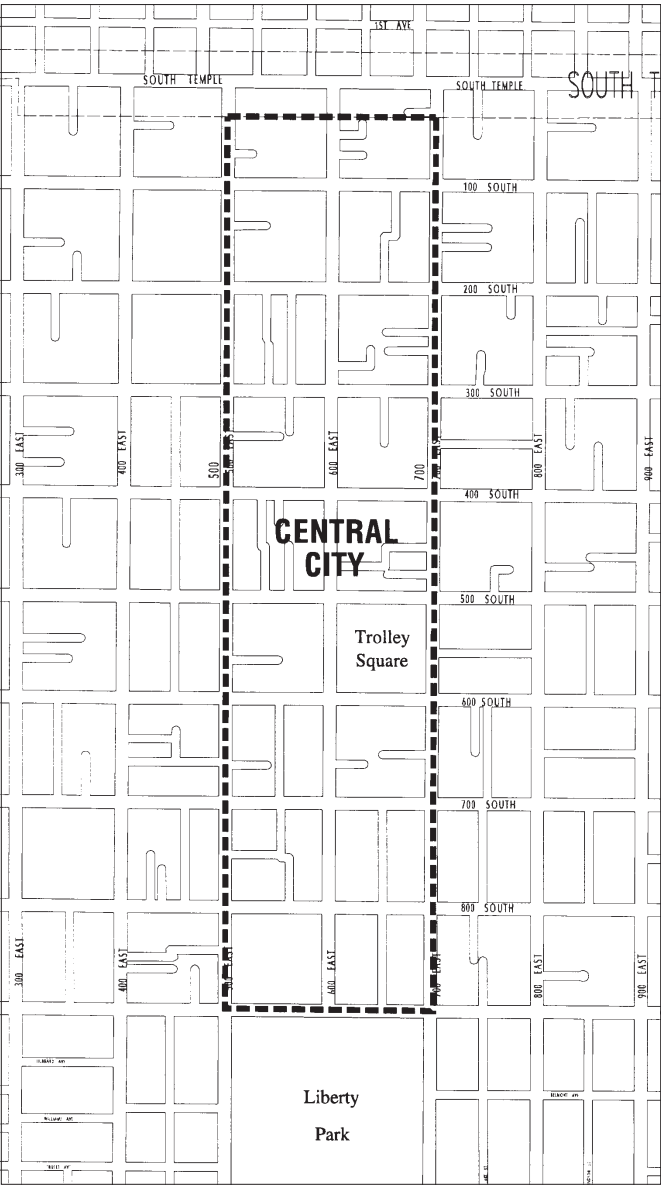


## Chapter 15

### Central City





Central City Historic District

Scale: 1"=100'

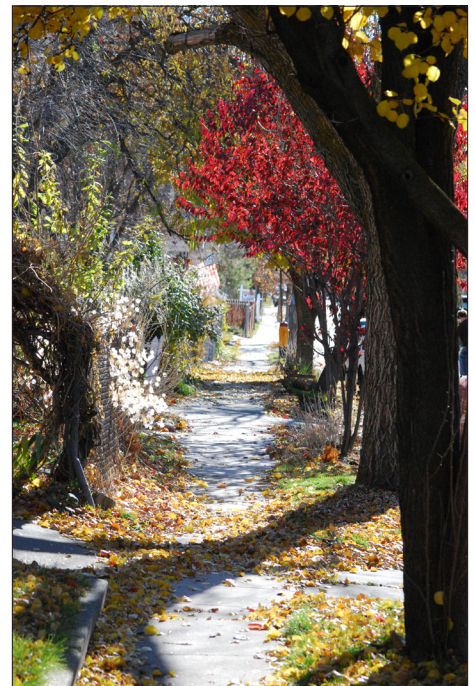
Cover page image: A 1909 view looking north from 100 South up 700 East and current view along 600 East..

## Historic Architectural Character

Encompassing one of the oldest neighborhoods of the city, the Central City Historic District is part of a larger area, known by the same name that is associated with the original plan of Salt Lake. Out of all of the requirements outlined by Joseph Smith's "Plat for the City of Zion" only the size of the blocks — ten acres — remains intact, and what was once a village and agricultural landscape now reflects the fact that Central City has the most complex zoning and land-use patterns in Salt Lake. Although a few adobe vernacular homes still exist, the commercial development, including fast-food restaurants, office buildings and retail centers, belies its early history. Despite recent, incompatible intrusions, Central City still has the most eclectic mix of historic architecture in Salt Lake, including several unique examples of a variety of building types.

Central City began to lose its early appearance and social structure with the building of the railroad and later the opening of the Bingham copper mine. These developments created a demand for unskilled workers who needed affordable places to live. In addition, Central City's proximity to the expanding downtown business district and nearby manufacturing and processing plants attracted clerks, laborers and craftspeople, so that early on it became known as a neighborhood for the working lower- and middle-class. With the exception of imposing residences at the north end of the district, Central City never became a fashionable neighborhood and the population was unstable. As the Central/Southern area survey states, "Workers moved on to other jobs, to other towns; more prosperous families were attracted to the benches, where the air was cleaner, and to new subdivisions."

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER	15 : 3
DEVELOPMENT TRENDS	15 : 5
CHARACTERISTICS OF CENTRAL CITY	15 : 6
GOALS FOR THE DISTRICT	15 : 6
STREETSCAPE FEATURES	15 : 7
STREET PATTERN	15 : 7
LANDSCAPE FEATURES - FENCES	15 : 7
SITE DESIGN FEATURES	15 : 7
FRONT SETBACK	15 : 7
PORCHES	15 : 8
ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES	15 : 8
ADDITIONS / ALTERATIONS	15 : 8
BUILDING MASS	15 : 8
BUILDING SCALE	15 : 9
BUILDING FORM	15 : 9
BUILDING MATERIALS	15 : 9
COMMERCIAL AREA FEATURES	15 : 10



*Mature landscaping now contributes significantly to the character of the Central City district.*

## PART III Historic Districts

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Given these demographics, rental housing has proliferated and much of the housing stock has always been modest. Thomas Newton was typical of the nineteenth-century Central City resident, as was his house. Newton worked as a clerk and shoemaker for ZCMI and constructed a small, side-gabled house in 1888 at 326 South 700 East. With its side-gabled massing and simple two-over-two windows, this house exhibited the simple forms of early Utah architecture, as well as illustrating how long such forms remained popular. This property was demolished and is now a parking lot.

Central City also has an extensive stock of “Victorian Eclectic” architecture. Several examples can be seen along 600 East between 600 and 800 South. Although not as popular for Central City’s small houses, the exuberant Queen Anne style was also used. Victorian styles continued to be built until the turn of the century but were quickly replaced by the bungalow, which by 1915 had become the small house of choice. Because the bungalow was more of a type rather than a style, this architectural form also lent itself well to many variations.

The transient nature of Central City’s population encouraged the construction of many rental units, including duplexes, fourplexes and multi-unit apartment buildings. Because of their small size, duplexes took on the style of whatever was popular at the time; and thus late Victorian, Craftsman, and Tudor Revival examples can be found. Apartment buildings, on the other hand, developed as their own form: the walk-up flat type used before 1918, and the “double-loaded corridor” introduced later. Central City also has several apartment types that are very unusual, such as one-story courtyard structures, and the only remaining example of Victorian row housing left in Salt Lake.

Central City was not only home to working-class citizens, and not all of the buildings are unassuming or were built as rentals. Professionals, businessmen and politicians lived in Central City, many residing in the neighborhood for decades. Frederick Albert Hale, a Cornell-educated architect, lived on 600 East from 1905 to 1934. He was one of the state’s finest architects, designing for wealthy clients. His work includes the Alta Club, the First Methodist Church and the Salt Lake Public Library (subsequently the Hansen Planetarium and now O. C. Tanner). Several lawyers and executives associated with the mining industry lived in the north end of the district. Politicians included Utah’s fourth governor, Simon Bamberger who lived at 623 East 100 South, and more recently, Palmer dePaulis, mayor from 1986 to 1992.

Similarly, not all of the buildings are modest. Mansions include Francis Armstrong’s, at 679 East 100 South, and Orange Salisbury’s, designed by Frederick Hale, at 574 East 100 South. Within the historic period affluent families built residences as four-squares, or in the Victorian Eclectic and Queen Anne styles.

Almost all of the buildings in Central City constructed before 1945 are residential. Exceptions include the Swedish Baptist Church, constructed in 1913, and the Twelfth Ward Chapel, built in 1939. The Swedish Baptist Church is Craftsman in style, and blends in well with the surrounding homes. The chapel is an unusual example of Art Moderne for this building type, and is located at 630 East 100 South. There are several small grocery stores scattered throughout the district, but the most impressive nonresidential structure is Trolley Square. Built as trolley barns for the Utah Electric and Railway Corporation from 1908 to 1910, the barns became a shopping and entertainment complex in the early 1970s.



Because of its early layout, large blocks and role as “the inner city,” Central City has always been beset by land-use conflicts. The large blocks led to haphazard development as early as 1900 and were subject to incompatible development because of insensitive zoning and an encroaching downtown. Central City has been subject to the problems associated with absentee ownership for decades. Fourth South developed as a commercial corridor after World War II and, with the addition of TRAX, is now a very busy street, with need for pedestrian-friendly improvements.

The City and residents have, if periodically, made attempts to improve Central City. One effort, still intact, was the creation of “parkings,” or landscaped medians, down several streets, including 600 East, as part of the removal of electrical wires and poles from the center of the street to accommodate the new street car system. In response to the deteriorating conditions of many houses because of foreclosures during the Depression, the first neighborhood beautification program was organized in the 1930s. Local resident Sheldon Brewster headed up the campaign to influence people to buy homes in the area and maintain them. In 1932 an organization called “the Central Civic Beautification League” fought an uphill battle to “turn the tide of decay and stultification back.” This group concentrated its efforts on keeping business out of residential areas, soliciting money for structural repair and attempting to instill a sense of community in the neighborhood. Most recently, neighborhood residents have been renovating structures, and petitioned the City to adopt part of Central City as a local historic district. The designation was accomplished in 1991.

### Development Trends

The district has experienced a surge of renovation and improvements to properties. Continued investment is expected, particularly in rehabilitation. New infill construction is anticipated in current plans for 400 South with specific focus on the station areas.



*Houses in the northern part of the district contrast with the more modest range of residences in the southern section.*

### Characteristics of the Central City Historic District

The following is a summary of key features of the neighborhood.

- Large, ten-acre blocks are located north of 600 South.
- Residential, interior block development exists south of 600 South. Streets such as Green, Park and Lowell are several interior streets that are very narrow, from 15' to 25' wide. The lots are typically about 2,500 square feet, setbacks about 10'.
- Garages are set at the rear of the lot and are accessed by alleys.
- Grass medians run the length of the district from Liberty Park to South Temple.
- Architectural styles range from the 1870s to the contemporary. "High-style" examples are generally located north of 400 South. Smaller, more modest homes are located in the southern portion of the district.
- Fourth South is totally commercial, and has no remaining historic structures.
- The centers of several of the large blocks north of 400 South are vacant



*Trolley Square under construction.*

### Goals for the District

The most significant feature of this district is its overall scale and simple character of buildings as a group, as a part of the streetscape. As a result, the primary goal is to preserve the general, modest character of each block as a whole, as seen from the street. Because the overall street character is the greatest concern, more flexibility in other areas, particularly renovation details should be allowed. This goal for preservation should also be considered in the context of related neighborhood goals to attract investment and promote affordability.



*Duplex and apartment buildings reflect the early development of the neighborhood.*



## Streetscape Features

### Street Pattern

The Central City district developed on a rectilinear plan, with spacious blocks intersected by wide streets. Sidewalks are detached and street trees are located in the park strips in many cases. Street widths vary considerably, ranging from a boulevard along 600 East Street to short, narrow alleys and lanes.

#### **15.1 The character and scale of the side streets in the district should be maintained.**

- Many side streets, particularly the lanes, have a distinct character and scale that should be preserved.

#### **15.2 Alleys should be maintained where they exist.**

- Their modest character should be preserved.

### Landscape Features - Fences

Many of Central City's yards are bounded by fences. Historically, materials were wood and metal.

#### **15.3 The use of wood, iron and wire fences is preferred, since they are more in character with the neighborhood pattern**

The design guidelines apply in addition to those in relevant preceding chapters, including Rehabilitation Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction and General Issues Design Guidelines.



*While the setback alignments of building frontages may vary they do so within a well defined range, helping to establish the character of the street block frontage.*

## Site Design Features

### Front Setback of Primary Structure

Although the district contains variety in setbacks, most buildings within a block appear to align along their front setbacks, within a narrow range of dimensions. Historically, larger buildings in the district, such as apartment buildings, were set back farther away from the street than the single structures. In some cases, small dwellings sit at the edge of the sidewalk, creating a very urban feel. This is particularly evident along Park Street, which has the character of a developed lane or alley. These traditional setbacks should be maintained.

#### **15.4 The established alignment of building fronts in the block should be maintained.**

- In general, larger, taller masses should be set back farther from the front than smaller structures.
- In some cases, therefore, a setback that is greater than the median setback may be appropriate.

### **15.5 The rhythm established by uniform setbacks in the block should be maintained.**

- It is particularly important that the traditional spacing pattern be maintained as seen from the street.
- The traditional building pattern should be followed in order to maintain the historic character of the street.
- The visual impact of new construction and additions on neighbors adjoining yards should be considered.
- Varying the height and setback of the structure along the side yard should be considered.

### **Porches**

A clear definition of the entry to each building is one of the most significant character-defining elements in the district. In a typical situation, the primary entrance faces the street and is sheltered with a porch.

### **15.6 Where historic porches exist, they should be preserved.**

- They also are strongly encouraged as a feature in new construction.

### **15.7 The primary entrance to the house should be clearly defined.**

- 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.

## **Architectural Features**

### **Additions/Alterations**

### **15.8 An addition should be in character with the main building, in terms of its size, scale and appearance.**

- This is especially important in portions of the district where buildings are modest in size and scale and have limited architectural detailing.
- Greater flexibility is appropriate, in terms of size of additions, on the northern edge of the district near South Temple Street, where many of the historic buildings are quite large.

### **Building Mass**

### **15.9 New buildings should appear similar in mass to those that were typical historically in the district.**

- If a building would be larger than others on the block, the larger masses of the building should be subdivided into smaller “modules” that are similar in size to the historic buildings.
- Orienting the entry to the street is preferred.
- Establishing a “progression” of entry elements, including walkway, landscape elements and porch also is encouraged.



### Building Scale

**15.10 New buildings should be designed to appear 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 facade 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.
- Also, consider using architectural details to give a sense of the traditional scale of the block.

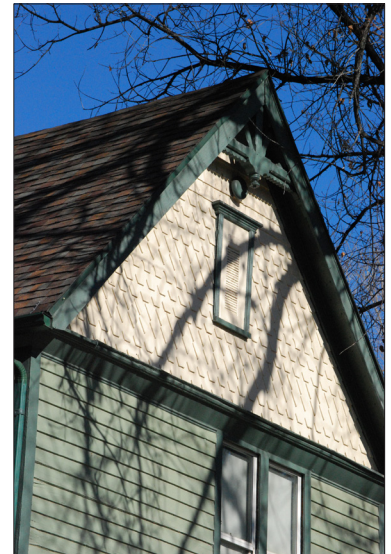


*Use building materials that will appear similar to those used historically.*

### Building Form

**15.11 A new building should be designed to have a form similar to those seen historically.**

- In most cases, the primary form of the house was a simple rectangle.
- In some styles, smaller, subordinate masses were then attached to this primary form.



### Building Materials

**15.12 Primary building materials that will appear similar to those used historically should be used.**

- Appropriate building materials include: brick, stucco, and painted wood.
- Substitute materials may be considered under some circumstances.
- See PART II, Chapter 2.



*The choice and decorative use of detailing and materials helps to define the human scale of many buildings.*

### Commercial Area Features

While most of the district retains a traditional residential character, some major commercial streets bisect the neighborhood in an east-west direction. These have redeveloped recently with commercial uses in auto-oriented designs and as a result, no historic context exists there.

Franchise facilities appear frequently along the cross streets. Most of these are set back substantially from the street, with large parking areas located in front. Large signs are often mounted on tall poles and landscaping is used sparsely. Curb cuts appear frequently and extensive portions of most sites are paved with hard surfaces. The result is that these areas offer little to pedestrians, in contrast to the pedestrian friendly character of the historic residential streets in the district. When viewed from within the more intact residential portions of the district, these commercial zones are visually disruptive.



*New buildings in the context of the original in Trolley Square.*

The design goal for these commercial areas is to enhance the pedestrian environment and to minimize negative visual impacts as seen from the historic residential portions of the district. It is not the intent to create a “historical” image for buildings in these areas, but simply to apply principles of good urban design that will enhance the visual quality while accepting the “contemporary” character that exists here.

#### **15.13 The visual impacts of automobile parking as seen from the sidewalk should be minimized.**

- Landscaped buffer areas should be used to screen and separate the sidewalk from parking and drive lanes within individual commercial sites.

#### **15.14 Service areas should be screened from the residential portions of the historic district.**

- Fences, walls and planting materials should be used to screen service areas.
- When feasible, locate service areas away from residential portions of the historic district.

#### **15.15 The visual impacts of signs should be minimized.**

- This is particularly important as seen from within the residential portions of the historic district.
- Smaller signs are preferred.
- Monument signs and low pole-mounted signs are appropriate.

#### **15.16 All site lighting should be shielded so that it does not spill over into residential portions of the historic district.**