

3 The Design Guidelines

The City has developed design guidelines for Residential and Commercial buildings and sites, and for Signs, to help interpret the design standards in the Ordinance, and as an information and guidance resource for the community and the City.

These design guidelines apply to construction work associated with locally-designated historic landmarks sites. They also apply to work within locally-designated historic districts in Salt Lake City, including the rehabilitation of historic structures and landscapes, alterations to “noncontributing” buildings, and to new construction. They apply to single family and multi-family buildings, commercial buildings and parks.

The design guidelines for the treatment of historic properties and for new construction within a historic district are based on nationally accepted principles for preservation and apply to designated historic resources across the city.

At the same time, different settlement patterns and historic resources exist within each of the historic districts, and establish a context and character unique to that neighborhood. Variables that define a distinct context may include topography, street pattern, building age, landscape features, and lot size.

Residential guidelines that are tailored to the individual character of each district are included to supplement the information and guidance provided in the city-wide guidelines. Specific residential guidelines are provided for the Avenues, Capitol Hill, South Temple, Central City, and University Historic Districts. Additional residential design guidelines will be developed for each future locally designated district.

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The design guidelines for commercial resources and signs address more common issues, and do not have additional guidelines for each historic district.

Why have historic preservation design guidelines?

The design guidelines provide a basis for making informed and consistent decisions about the rehabilitation and treatment of historic resources. They also serve as an informational, educational and planning resource for property owners and their design professionals who seek to make improvements which may affect historic resources.

While the design guidelines are written so that they can be used by the layman to plan improvements, property owners are strongly encouraged to enlist the assistance of qualified design and planning professionals, including architects and preservation consultants.

The purpose of the guidelines, and the review process through which they are administered, is to explain and promote the sound preservation of the historic and architectural heritage of the city. These resources are fragile, and are consequently vulnerable to inappropriate alteration and demolition.

Pressure exists to alter or demolish historic buildings because the close-in neighborhoods where they are found are again regarded as attractive areas to live and work, and widely appreciated for their rich and unique character. These pressures are increasing as the population grows along the Wasatch Front; as residents face longer commutes, an inner-city location becomes a more attractive alternative.

Passage of the state's Economic Incentives for Historic Preservation bill in 1993, which provides income tax credits for rehabilitation work exceeding \$10,000 for residential properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has also brought new residents and investors into Salt Lake City's historic neighborhoods.

Basic Preservation Theory

The Concept of Historic Significance

What makes a property historically significant?

In general, properties must be at least 50 years old before they can be evaluated for potential historic significance, although exceptions do exist when a more recent property clearly is significant. Historic properties must have qualities that give them significance. A property or a district may be significant for one or more of the following reasons:

- Association with events that contributed to the broad patterns of history, the lives of significant people, or the understanding of Salt Lake City's prehistory or history.
- Construction and design associated with distinctive characteristics of a building type, period, or construction method.
- An example of an architect or master craftsman or an expression of particularly high artistic values.
- Physical integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association as defined by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places, and
- The age of the site.

The Period of Significance

In most cases, a property is significant because it represents, or is associated with, a particular period in its history. Frequently, this period begins with the construction of a site or building and continues through the peak of its early occupation. Building fabric and features that date from the period of significance typically contribute to the character of the site.

The Concept of Integrity

In addition to being historically significant, a property also must have integrity.

To have integrity a sufficient percentage of the structure or site must date from the period of significance. The majority of the site's features or the building's structural system and materials should date from the period of significance, and its character defining features also should remain intact. These may include architectural details, such as dormers and porches, ornamental brackets and moldings and materials, as well as the overall mass and form of the building. It is these elements that allow a building or district to be identified as representing a particular point or period in the history of the city.

See the links below to the basis of preservation theory and principles which are summarized here.

Historic Preservation Principles

The following preservation principles and practice reflect national philosophy and should be applied to all historic properties in Salt Lake City.

National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services.
www.nps.gov/tps/

Online Training & Information
www.nps.gov/tps/education/online-training.htm

Secretary of the Interior's Standards
www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments.htm
www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm
www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation.htm

Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines
www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm
www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/sustainability-guidelines.pdf

State Historic Preservation Office, Utah Financial Assistance
<http://heritage.utah.gov/history/tax-credits>

Respect the historic design character of the building.

Changing the style of the building or making it look older than it really is should be avoided. Confusing the character by mixing elements of different styles would not respect the historic design character of the building.

Seek uses that are compatible with the historic character of the building.

Building uses that are closely related to the original use are preferred. Every reasonable effort should be made to provide a compatible use that will require minimal alteration to the building and its site. An example of an appropriate adaptive use might be converting a residence into a bed and breakfast establishment. This can often be accomplished without radical external alteration of the original architecture.

Note that the Historic Landmark Commission does not review uses; however, property owners should consider the impacts that some changes in use would have upon their historic properties, since this may affect design considerations that are reviewed by the Commission. In addition, the zoning code provides some incentives associated with certain uses and these may require Commission comment.

These uses may aid in interpreting how the building was used historically. Check the zoning code to determine which uses are allowed.

When a more radical change in use is necessary to preserve and keep the building in active service, then those uses that require the least alteration to significant elements are preferred.

It may be, that in order to adapt your building to the proposed new use, such radical alteration to its significant elements would be required that the entire concept might be inappropriate. Experience has shown, however, that in most cases designs can be developed that respect the historic integrity of the building while also accommodating new uses.

Note that more radical changes in use can make projects more expensive or result in the loss of significant features. Carefully evaluate the cost of alteration, as adaptation for a radical change may prove too costly, or may destroy too many significant features.

Protect & Maintain Significant Features & Stylistic Elements.

Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship should be treated with sensitivity. The best preservation procedure is to maintain historic features from the outset so that intervention is not required. Protection includes the maintenance of historic material through such simple treatments as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal and the reapplication of paint.

Preserve Existing Original Site Features or Original Building Materials & Features.

Preserve original site features such as grading, rock walls, etc. Avoid removing or altering original materials and features. Preserve original doors, windows, porches and other architectural features.

Repair Deteriorated Historic Features & Replace Only Those Elements that Cannot be Repaired.

Upgrade existing materials and elements, using recognized preservation methods whenever possible. If disassembly is necessary for repair or restoration, use methods that minimize damage to original materials and replace the original configuration.

Selecting a Preservation Approach

Each preservation project is unique.

Consequently, a 'one size fits all' set of rules and regulations will only apply in a minority of instances. It may include a variety of treatment techniques, including the repair and replacement of features, and the maintenance of those already in good condition. Some of the basic preservation treatments are described in the section that follows. In each case, it is important to develop an overall strategy for treatment that is based on an analysis of the building and its setting.

This research should begin with an investigation of the history of the property. Research may identify design alterations that have occurred, and may help in developing an understanding of the significance of the building as a whole, as well as its individual components.

This historical research should be followed with an on-site assessment of existing conditions. In this on-site inspection, identify those elements that are original, and those that have been altered. Also determine the condition of individual building components.

Finally, list the requirements for continued use of the property. Is additional space needed? Or should the work focus on preserving and maintaining the existing configuration?

By combining an understanding of the history of the house, its present condition, and the need for actions that will lead into the future, one can then develop a preservation approach. In doing so, consider the definitions of alternative approaches that follow.

Adaptive Use

Converting a building to a new use, one that is different from that which its design reflects, is considered to be “adaptive use.” For example, converting a residential structure to offices is adaptive use. A good adaptive use project retains the historic character of the building while accommodating its new functions.

Maintenance

Some work involves keeping a property in good condition by repairing features as or before any deterioration becomes apparent, and using procedures that retain the original character and finish of these feature/s. Regular or preventive maintenance is carried out prior to any noticeable deterioration. No alteration or reconstruction is involved. Such work will avoid having to deal with future repairs and is considered “maintenance.” Residents are strongly encouraged to maintain their properties in good condition to ensure that more aggressive, and consequently more destructive, expensive, measures of rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction will not be needed.

Preservation

The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building or structure, and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site, is defined as “preservation.” It may include initial stabilization work, and minor repair where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials and details. Essentially, the property is kept in its current good condition.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is the process of returning a property to a state which makes a contemporary use possible, while still preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values. Rehabilitation may include the adaptive reuse of the building, and major or minor additions may also occur. Most good preservation projects in Salt Lake City may be considered rehabilitation projects.

Renovation

To renovate means to improve by repair, to revive. In renovation, the usefulness and appearance of the building is enhanced. The basic character and significant details are respected and preserved, but some sympathetic alterations may also occur. Alterations that are made are generally reversible, should future owners wish to restore the building to its original design.

Restoration

To restore, one reproduces the appearance of a building exactly as it looked at a particular moment in time; to reproduce a pure style—either interior or exterior. This process may include the removal of later work or the replacement of missing historic features. A restoration approach is used on missing details or features of an historic building when the features are determined to be particularly significant to the character of the structure, and when the original configuration is accurately documented.

PART I Preservation in Salt Lake City

Remodeling

To remake or to make over the design image of a building is to remodel it. The appearance is changed by removing original detail and by adding new features that are out of character with the original. Remodeling is inappropriate for historic buildings in Salt Lake City.

Combining Strategies

Many successful rehabilitation projects that involve historic structures in Salt Lake City may include a combination of preservation, restoration, and other appropriate treatments. For example, a house may be adapted to use as a restaurant, and in the process, missing porch brackets may be replicated in order to restore the original appearance, while existing original dormers may be preserved.

See also Appendix A, Part 2.

National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services. **Four Approaches to the Treatment of Historic Properties**
www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments.htm



The uniform grid of the City of Zion Plan is readily apparent in this early bird's-eye view.

How to Use the Design Guidelines

Arrangement & Format of the Document and Chapters

The Residential Design Guidelines are arranged in four sections. Three sections deal with Rehabilitation, General Issues, New Construction in PART II. Additional design guidelines for each Historic District form the fourth section and PART III of the Handbook.

Within the Rehabilitation section the chapters address specific design characteristics of a historic building, and include several topics within one subject and chapter. The chapters are organized in several sections, including introductory and explanatory information on Context and Character, the overall design objective, and the actual design guidelines, often with illustrations. The chapters also include supplementary resources in the form of additional reference material and suggested maintenance tips.

The guidelines are written to identify what is important and why, when considering a project in a historic district or relating to a city landmark site. They are intended to be informative, and to help with the reasoning and evaluation processes associated with both planning and reviewing a project for sensitivity to its context - whether that context is a building or a district.

The Context and Character paragraphs, the Design Objective, and the specific Design Guideline with its illustrations, all form a part of the guideline and help to determine the most appropriate course of action for a specific circumstance. The process is explained in greater detail below.

Arrangement & Format of Historic District Chapters in the Residential Guidelines

These chapters provide additional guidance for individual residential historic districts and have a different format.

Historic Architectural Character

A general description of the district includes a summary of the history of its development, helping to explain the historic form and character unique to that historic district.

Development Trends

Based on the type of previous development in an area, the City has expectations about future trends in development.

The Characteristics of the District

The key characteristics of the district are summarized to inform future design considerations. This summary provides a context within which alterations, and particularly new construction, should be considered. The objective is to support form, scale and design which are sensitive to the immediate context and the district.

Goals for the District

The district design goals establish the long-range view for the character of the district, and provide a foundation for the design guidelines that follow, like the design objectives in other chapters. In cases where the special conditions in a specific project are such that the accompanying detailed design guidelines do not appear to address the situation directly, then this statement of goals should serve as the basis for determining the appropriateness of the proposed work or direction.

The Design Guidelines

The design guidelines are arranged in several sections, which include Streetscape Features, Site and Landscape Design Features, Architectural Features and Appropriateness of Use. Design guidelines are identified in bold within each section, and each guideline may have one or more associated bullet point/s to clarify the application of the guideline. The guidelines are also numbered to provide specific reference in the review process. The city should assess whether these guidelines and goals have been adequately met in consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work.



*Governor's Mansion Carriage House.
Utah Heritage Award recipient 2012.*

Format of a Design Guideline

The design guidelines' format and structure establish a hierarchical framework that provides general and detailed design advice and also design options where the design guideline readily relates to the circumstances of the project, the site or building. Where the relationship is less obvious, on the other hand, and the specific guideline/s do not directly address the individual circumstances of the case, the design objective and the context character definition discussion immediately preceding the guideline/s, provide general a direction on the design intent and appropriate solutions.

Each design guideline in the document typically will have five components.

1. Context Character Definition

This component describes the elements of the character of the building and/or its setting or context that are most important to retain, if the integrity of the building or district is to be preserved. This may include technical information, such as factors associated with the preservation of a historic building material, for example, as well as general preservation theory that is relevant to the topic at hand.

The guidelines and their associated context character definitions in each chapter may be divided into pertinent sub-topics. For example, in the chapter addressing Site Features, the topic "Walkways," is among those discussed. This organization allows the user to select rapidly the specific design topics within a section that are most relevant.

This discussion provides the rationale and foundation for the Design Objective.

Design Guideline Format - Example

Chapter 1. Site Features

A variety of site features are characteristic of early Salt Lake City residential neighborhoods. A house is usually appreciated in its immediate street setting. Individual sites and gardens may share common characteristics which help to define community character.

Design Objective

Historic site features that survive should be retained, preserved or repaired when feasible. New site features should be compatible with the historic context and the character of the neighborhood.



The low retaining wall supporting an ornate historic iron fence contributes significantly to the character of the streetscene.

Masonry Retaining Walls

Sandstone retaining walls were often used in neighborhoods where steep slopes occurred. Many of these walls survive and often are important character-defining features for individual properties and for the districts in which they are found. Some early concrete retaining walls also exist. These should be preserved.

Each design Guideline in the document typically will have five components.

2. Design Objective

Drawing upon existing character and/or the desired condition of the design element/s or context, the design objective is a statement of intent for the treatment of the design feature or characteristic. In cases in which special conditions in a specific project are such that the detailed design guideline/s that follow do not appear to address the situation directly, then the design objective provides a basis and direction for determining the appropriateness of the proposed work.

3. Design Guidelines

The design guideline is typically performance-oriented and describes a desired design treatment. There may be one or more design guidelines for each design topic.

4. Design Guideline Application Points

Additional information about application of the guideline appears in bullet points, and may include expanded explanation of the guideline, suggestions on how to meet the guideline objective, or additional application points to consider.

5. Design Guideline Illustrations

Illustrations clarify the intent of the guideline; captions highlight particular points or examples.

Maintenance Tips

A ‘side bar’ in many chapters provides Maintenance Tips for the homeowner as points or matters to consider in the regular upkeep of a building. Regular maintenance will reinvest in the unique qualities of the property and keep the finishes and details in good repair, while avoiding subsequent, and more expensive, repair or replacement.

Additional Information

A further ‘side bar’ in each chapter provides a brief list of other publications and weblinks as a resource for owners, designers and builders. These references may provide more background on a topic or detailed ‘how to’ instruction.


Some additional information and considerations are provided for Historic Glass and Color, in Ch.3 Windows and Ch.11 General Issues. This information does not form part of the review process for the ordinance design standards, and is provided to supplement an understanding of these matters. This informational text is differentiated in dark red.

Additional Information

Murtagh, William J. *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*. Pittstown, New Jersey: The Main Street Press, 1988.

Design Guidelines Resources - Information + Maintenance Tips - Example

Chapter 5. Porches



Enclosing a front porch will significantly compromise the architectural integrity of the house.

Additional Information

Additional Information

Massey, James C. and Shirley Maxwell. "Reading the Old House" and "Sleeping Porches." *Old House Journal*, July/August 1995.

5.4 The open character and integrity of a historic front porch should be retained.

- Enclosing a porch should be avoided.
- Restore a previously enclosed porch to its original open character whenever feasible.

Maintenance Tips

Maintenance Tips for Porches

- Maintain drainage off of the main roof of the house, as well as off of the roof of the porch.
- Channel water away from the foundation of the porch.
- Maintain a good coat of paint on all exposed surfaces.

3 : 10 PART I

Salt Lake City