

# PART I

## PRESERVATION IN SALT LAKE CITY

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*Cover Images:*

*The John and Emily Platts home at 364 Quince Street. Platts was an English stone mason who came to Salt Lake in 1854 and built this house four years later. When the current owners purchased the house in 1975, it was in the state of disrepair seen in the right photograph. Over the years, they have renovated it so that it is a functional house for their family, while preserving the historic character of the home.*

# 1 Why Preserve Historic Buildings & Neighborhoods?

Across the nation, citizens appreciate historic and architectural character as being essential to the identity and unique character of their communities. They promote historic preservation because to do so is essential to cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability. Historic resources are key ingredients in neighborhood livability and quality of life, minimizing negative impacts on the environment and yielding economic vitality and reward.

In an increasingly fast-paced, anonymous and 'placeless' form of urban development, the individual character of each community is a precious identity. This identity helps to create a sense of stability and enables an understanding of how this unique character, itself a product of incremental development over time, can provide a direction and inspiration for the form of future development.

Many residents and businesses are also drawn to historic buildings and neighborhoods because the quality and richness of design, construction, craftsmanship and materials, are typically very high; buildings that are readily adaptable to contemporary needs. Salt Lake City is no exception, and has a series of visually rich and individual residential historic neighborhoods and commercial buildings.

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The historic environment is the cultural landscape of our community. It represents the historical documentation of the incremental evolution of our society and neighborhoods. These 'pages' document the city, reflecting the many thousands of decisions which together have created Salt Lake City's urban environment, from a cultural legacy representing many countries, and many families, and many skills, and many values.



*Liberty Park*

National Park Service. **National Register of Historic Places Program** - About. NPS, 6/2011  
[www.cr.nps.gov/nr/about.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/about.htm)  
[www.nps.gov/history/nr/](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/)  
[www.nps.gov/history/nr/national\\_register\\_fundamentals.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/national_register_fundamentals.htm)

State Historic Preservation Office, Utah. **National Register of Historic Places**  
<http://heritage.utah.gov/history/national-register>

### Culture, Quality of Life & Livability

When groups of older buildings occur as a historic district, they can create a local environmental character which is so much greater than the sum of its parts. The district is defined on a human scale, which encourages walking and neighborly interaction. Mature trees and landscaping, stone walls and decorative architectural composition and features contribute to its sense of individuality. That identity is unique to each historic neighborhood, is increasingly rare, and is impossible to design into a new development or urban area.

This physical sense of neighborhood cohesion can enhance community stability, reinforce desirable social patterns and networks, and contribute to a sense of reassurance and security. Many residents of historic districts, for example, note how easily they get to know their neighbors, and enjoy the fact that they are recognized by others who live in the vicinity.

Older homes and neighborhoods provide housing in a variety of sizes, serving a wide range of housing needs and desires. Within these residential neighborhoods small businesses developed, providing needed services and creating a rich legacy of architecture, usually as individual commercial buildings which are designed in scale with the houses. Many continue in commercial use today.

Maintaining these historic settlement patterns and original fabric preserves the setting from which residents learn about and explore our culture. Our historic neighborhoods are effectively a kaleidoscope of local, regional and global family lineage and cultural backgrounds. This 'stage' or 'classroom' provides a foundation of knowledge for our current and future identity, understanding and achievement.

### A Sense of History, Identity & Art

Once the basic needs of existence and survival are met, humanity needs more to enhance its experience. There is a need to enrich the everyday experiences of living and working with a sense of history, time and art.

The historic neighborhoods and buildings of Salt Lake City provide a sense of maturity and permanence that can be apparent and also elusive. Why do these streets take this form, and who laid them out? Who designed and built this building, and who first lived here? What happened here, and when? Who decided to alter this part of the house, and why? What color was the house originally?

A principal reason to live in one of the more historic parts of our city is not solely connected to proximity to downtown, walkability and property investment. It is also directly related to the values and experience sought in visiting a historic city or site on vacation. It has to do with the elevation and refreshment that comes from the experience of a living work of art and architecture and is in itself a contribution to the present and future quality and richness of the neighborhood and city.

National Park Service. National Register of Historic Places Program. **Publications & Links**

[www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/index.htm)  
[www.nps.gov/history/nr/preservation\\_links.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/preservation_links.htm)

## Economic Vitality & Employment

Historic resources are finite and cannot be replaced, making them precious commodities that many people hold in high regard today.

Preservation tends to enhance the attraction and appreciation of neighborhoods and the value of private property. Studies across the nation have documented that, where local historic districts are established, property values typically appreciate faster, or at very least are stabilized where they might have been previously declining. In this sense, designation of a historic district appears to establish a climate for enhanced stability, civic pride, and further personal investment in the area. (See references on this page.)

Residents within the district know that the time and money they spend on improving their properties are likely to be matched with similar commitment and efforts on surrounding properties. These investments will not be undermined by over-scaled or otherwise inappropriate construction next door, or nearby. They consequently tend to have a multiplier effect in terms of neighborhood character and desirability.

The condition of neighboring properties affects the value of one's own property. People invest in a neighborhood at least as much as in the individual structures themselves. Investment in a historic district is often more attractive, with property owners recognizing that each owner benefits from the commitment of other neighbors. An indication of the success of preservation would be the more than 1.4 million resources that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places; including, sites, districts, structures, and objects.

[NPS, 6/2011, [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/about.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/about.htm)]

In terms of local economic vitality and employment, preservation projects contribute more to the local economy than do new building programs. Each dollar spent on a preservation project has a higher percentage devoted to labor, usually local skilled labor, and to the purchase of materials available locally. By contrast, new construction typically has a higher percentage of each dollar devoted to materials or components that are usually produced outside of the local economy, and merely assembled on site. Consequently, when money is spent on rehabilitating a building, it has a higher local "multiplier effect," keeping more money circulating for longer in the local economy, when compared with new construction.

Rehabilitating a historic building frequently costs less than constructing a new one, aside from the costs arising from any demolition. In fact, the guidelines for rehabilitation of historic structures presented in this document promote cost-saving measures. They encourage smaller and simpler solutions, which in themselves provide savings. Preserving building elements that are in good repair is preferred to replacing them. Preservation and repairs are also typically less expensive.

In some instances, however, appropriate restoration procedures may cost more than less sensitive treatments, although they are likely to endure much longer. In such cases, property owners are compensated for this extra effort, to some extent, in the added value that historic district or landmark designation provides. Special economic incentives also exist to help offset potential added costs where they do arise.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. **Economic Impact of Historic Preservation**  
[www.achp.gov/economicstudies.html](http://www.achp.gov/economicstudies.html)

National Trust for Historic Preservation. **Community Revitalization**  
[www.preservationnation.org/issues/community-revitalization/](http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/community-revitalization/)



### Mobility & Transportation

Living in a more historic neighborhood helps reduce the city resident's dependence upon the car for everyday needs. Older neighborhoods are close to the business, retail, cultural and employment centers in the downtown area, the very reasons prompting their initial development. Residents were and are able to live closer to where they work, avoiding or minimizing the need to use the car.

The greater concentration and walkability provided by these urban residential neighborhoods also enhances the economic viability of public transportation as a convenient and less expensive alternative to the car. This settlement pattern was initially directly influenced by the city's street car network and now supports its re-emergence. There are the further benefits of enhanced air quality through a reduction in gasoline use and toxic exhaust emissions, poor air quality being a persistent issue along the Wasatch Front from early development periods to the present.



*A rich architectural variety and mature landscaping create an attractive and walkable neighborhood in all of the city's historic districts.*

### Sustainability & the Environment

Preserving a historic structure makes sound environmental conservation policy and practice.

Maintaining the use of a building is the ultimate in recycling since no demolition waste is generated, no processing of materials is required, and no energy consumed. No new construction materials are required, avoiding the energy, waste and pollution from manufacturing, and avoiding energy use for transportation and construction.

The embodied energy which was used to create the original building and its components is preserved and reinvested. Old buildings have a great deal of embodied energy. The extraction and processing of building materials (e.g., wood, stone, and brick), the transportation of those materials, and the construction labor represented in the final structure, mean that demolition of an existing building and constructing anew is notably less energy-efficient than rehabilitating or constructing an addition for the existing building. Conserving a building preserves its embodied energy and reduces the need for new materials. Demolition waste alone accounts for 25% of waste in municipal landfills every year.

Older buildings (up to 1920s) are, as a rule, as energy efficient as those buildings built today under increasingly stringent energy efficiency requirements. They are more energy-efficient than buildings constructed from the 1920s to the 1990s. These inherent advantages can be further enhanced through an understanding of the materials, the construction and the essential qualities of traditional design and craftsmanship. Thick, solid, heat-retaining walls in brick and stone, with access to natural ventilation, contribute to their excellent energy efficiency. Historic buildings can also benefit from new technology in the form of solar panels or shingles.

## The Quality of Design & Construction

Design, building and craft skills gradually focused on Salt Lake City from many parts of the world. New residents often brought with them centuries-old traditions in construction and the arts, and frequently an appreciation of urban and architectural sophistication. This coincidence of culture, sophisticated design and traditional craft skills is reflected in the earlier development of the city.

Most of the historic structures in the city are of high design and construction quality. The wood used for example came from mature old growth trees, was carefully seasoned and was typically milled to full dimensions, yielding stronger and more durable framework, cladding, windows, trim and details. Masonry walls were carefully laid, resulting in buildings with considerable stability, and refined, delicate and precise detailing.

Our historic buildings were thoughtfully and traditionally embellished and detailed, while the materials and finishes, including fixtures, wood floors and trim were generally of high quality; all characteristics which are now increasingly rare, and highly sought and appreciated.

By comparison, in today's new construction, materials of such quality are rarely available and comparable detailing, if achievable, is very expensive. The high quality of design and construction in historic buildings is consequently a significant asset, with notable durability and needing minimal basic maintenance.

## Adaptability

Historic building floor plans tend to be readily adaptable, accommodating contemporary life-styles and supporting a diversity of requirements. Rooms are frequently large, permitting a variety of uses while retaining the overall historic character of each building. In residential areas private open space often exists on the lot to accommodate an addition, if needed. In commercial buildings the space tends to be both flexible and varied, and usually comes with a significant identity and architectural character, factors which are usually very attractive for small business.



*A number of larger residences have been adapted for business use.*

National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services.

### **Sustainability**

[www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability.htm)

National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services.

### **Energy Efficiency**

[www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/energy-efficiency.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/energy-efficiency.htm)

National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services.

### **New Technologies**

[www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/new-technology.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/new-technology.htm)

National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services.

### **Case Studies**

[www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/case-studies.htm#fuller-paint](http://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/case-studies.htm#fuller-paint)

National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services.

### **Research**

[www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/research.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/research.htm)

National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services.

### **Resources**

[www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/resources.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/resources.htm)

National Trust for Historic Preservation. **Weatherization**

[www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization/](http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization/)

National Trust for Historic Preservation. **Sustainability**

[www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/](http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/)

[www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/green-lab/](http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/green-lab/)

