



III HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Apartment & Multifamily Development

PART III Historic Districts

APARTMENT & MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT

CH. 13 THE AVENUES	13 : 1 - 6
CH. 14 CAPITOL HILL	14 : 1 - 6
CH. 15 CENTRAL CITY	15 : 1 - 4
CH. 16 SOUTH TEMPLE	16 : 1 - 8
CH. 17 UNIVERSITY	17 : 1 - 2
CH. 18 WESTMORELAND PLACE	18 : 1 - 2

The following chapters complement, and should be read in conjunction with, the Historic District chapters in [A Preservation Handbook for Historic Residential Properties & Districts in Salt Lake City](#) which can be accessed directly from the links in each chapter.

Ch.13 THE AVENUES

A HISTORY OF APARTMENT AND MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

The following background on the historical development of apartment and other multifamily buildings in The Avenues draws directly from the reconnaissance level surveys of the district in 2008 and 2013. (Broschinsky)

Statement of Significance

The Avenues Historic District is architecturally significant for its richness of architectural character and range of architectural diversity. Although the area functioned primarily as a middle-class suburb for the downtown commercial district, the Avenues Historic District represents contributing architectural types and styles built over more than a century. The district features vernacular adobe dwellings built by the first residents, as well as palatial mansions designed for the city's titans of industry and commerce by Salt Lake's most notable architects. Throughout the district are small tracts of Victorian Eclectic cottages, built mostly by small-scale speculative developers for the city's professionals, artisans and laborers. The neighborhood includes an impressive collection of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century duplexes and walk-up apartment blocks for the middle and working class, built along streetcar lines for easy access to the downtown business district.

Victorian Urbanization Period, 1880-1908

While the majority of these resources are single-family dwellings, this period also represents the first extant examples of multifamily housing stock, commercial and institutional buildings.

Multiple-family housing began to appear in the district in the early 1890s. According to one report, in April of 1888, there was a "scarcity of rentable houses and a great demand for them," particularly four-room cottages for small families. Row houses, small apartment buildings (mostly four-unit blocks) and double houses (i.e. duplexes) were built throughout the district during this period. A few multi-story walk-up apartment blocks were built toward the end of this period.

Forty of the contributing buildings of this period are double house/duplexes. The majority are the Double House A or Double C House types as described by Carter and Goss (PART I Section 4). There are twenty-four examples of other multifamily housing types, including four-unit block, row houses, walk-ups, and a few double-loaded corridors. The larger buildings are between two to four stories, built of brick, with most exhibiting elements of the Victorian Eclectic style. The large-scale blocks are found closer to the downtown business district. The Caithness Apartments, built in 1908, are an early example of the Prairie School-style.



Caithness Apartments



Hillcrest Apartments



Wilshire Arms Apartments



1st Avenue

Bungalow and Period Revival Cottage Infill Period, 1909-1931

The need for housing stock close to the city during this period is indicated by the relatively high number of multi-housing units constructed between 1910 and 1931. By the time Salt Lake City passed its first zoning ordinance in 1927, this increased density was reflected in zoning that allowed for multifamily dwellings and commercial uses on the most trafficked intersections.

Most of the apartment blocks built during this period were three to four-story walk-ups and double-loaded corridors decorated in popular styles of the period, for example, the Hillcrest Apartments on First Avenue (Neo-Classical, 1915), or the Piva-Quincy-Ontario blocks at 156-162 “I” Street (Prairie School, 1917). By the late 1920s, the period revival cottage duplex was the most popular multi-housing property type in the Avenues.

The fifty-seven multifamily residences from this period are divided more evenly than the previous period, between twenty-three double house/duplexes and thirty-four larger apartment blocks. The duplexes are mostly period cottage styles from the mid to late 1920s and many are located at the corner of blocks. The apartment buildings, in particular the double-loaded corridors, include an impressive range of styles such as Neo-Classical, Prairie School, Mission, Spanish Colonial and Jacobethan Revival.

There are a few historic carports and garages that are associated with both large and small multifamily buildings.

Depression and War Domestic Adaptation Period, 1932-1946

During the 1930s, the period-revival style continued to be popular for individual residences, duplexes and small apartment blocks. There is a lot of variation in the individual styles. Although rare, the handful of Art Moderne buildings, such as the fourplex at 604 First Avenue built in 1936-1937, are exceptional examples of the style.

There are a number of apartment blocks built in this period, mostly eclectic in type and style, and therefore difficult to categorize as a whole. It is significant to note the relatively high number of multi-car garages associated with apartment blocks from this period.

Post-War Infill, Multi-Family Conversion and Apartment Block Period, 1947-1965

Prompted in part by a post-war housing shortage, numerous apartment blocks were constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The building type depended on the amount of available land. In some cases, an undivided lot or several contiguous lots were purchased, the existing houses razed and a two or three story four-unit block with a central interior entrance was built (mostly 1950s). Where only one or two narrow lots were available, a boxcar type apartment block was built. Boxcar apartments are typically two-story narrow buildings with exterior stairs/doors and the narrow end facing the street (mostly 1960s).



Castle Heights Apartments



Arlington Apartments

There are 124 (7 percent) contributing resources built during this 1945 to 1967 period. As with the previous period, there were few vacant lots in the area and most new construction followed demolitions of older homes. The remaining resources are divided fairly evenly between single-family and multifamily residences. There is a bump in construction in the late 1940s, which slows down through the 1950s. A second rise in construction occurs at the end of the period in the 1960s with an upsurge in the construction of apartment blocks.

There is a noticeable increase in the number of multifamily housing units built during this period. In the 1950s, the trend was toward two-story four-unit blocks with a wide facade, a central entrance and an interior corridor. The boxcar apartment block first appears in 1953, but increased quickly in popularity to a peak in the mid-1960s. There were twenty seven built in the district between 1953 and 1963. The boxcar, with its perpendicular orientation, could be easily adapted to the narrow lots of the Avenues. The most common examples are two-stories with exterior entrances facing the driveway.

Low-slope hipped roofs were popular on the apartment blocks of the 1950s, giving them a Post-War style. However, by the late 1950s, the trend was toward flat roofs and more modern styles. By the early 1960s, decorative concrete block was as popular as brick for the construction of the apartment block. There are several good examples of the Post-War Modern style built during this period.

Decline & High Density Development, 1966-77

Construction slowed dramatically in the Avenues after 1965. The majority of buildings constructed during this period were apartment blocks, including several high-rise structures between four and eight stories. These high-density buildings have been decried as “inconsistent with the scale of the surrounding buildings. The emergence of these over-scale buildings and the demolitions that preceded them was part of the impetus for the preservation and revitalization movement that began in the late 1970s.

This period of high-density development is represented by 53 resources (3 percent), all non-contributing. Most were mid to large-scale apartment blocks with very few single-family dwellings. This period is remarkable as the peak period of conversion of older houses to multiple apartment units.

Broschinsky, Korral *Avenues Historic District* RL Survey 2007-8

Broschinsky, Korral *Avenues Historic District* RL Survey 2013

See also: [A Preservation Handbook for Historic Residential Properties & Districts in Salt Lake City, Ch.13 The Avenues](#)



1st Avenue