

Ch. 15 CENTRAL CITY

A HISTORY OF APARTMENT AND MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

The following background on the historical development of apartment and other multifamily buildings in Central City draws directly from the reconnaissance level survey of the district in 2013.

(Certus 2013)

Transition (1870-1899)

Multifamily housing increased in number in the area as population density increased along with the easy transit access to employment in downtown Salt Lake City and elsewhere in the valley. Residential buildings became more diversified, larger, and more permanent during this period.

Ninety-three buildings estimated to date to this period are present in the Central City district. As with all periods, the building stock of this period is dominated by residential properties, and specifically by single family dwellings. The walk-up apartments from this period are primarily located in the northern portion of the district.



Cornell Apartments

Mature Community (1900-1922)

On one hand, single-family housing construction boomed as more residents flooded the neighborhood. Larger lots were subdivided and platted subdivisions were built out. Residential courts consisting of multiple attached single-family dwellings also became popular in the area, as did residential courts of small, detached bungalows.

On the other hand, a slow exodus of single-family homeowners also began during this period. This is evidenced, in part, by the increase in the number of single-family dwellings being used as rental properties (Giraud 2001).

Construction of multifamily housing, particularly in the form of multi-story apartment buildings, also increased during this period. These apartments, along with the residential courts, served to increase the population density of the neighborhood.

True expressions of Period Revival styles can be found in the Central City district on multifamily dwellings, particularly walk-up apartments, or in other types of multifamily units, such as hotel courts. The Neoclassical style apartments at 68 South 500 East and the Spanish Colonial Revival style hotel court at 614 East 600 South—designed by architect A.O. Treganza—are good examples of the application of Period Revival styles to buildings in the district. Walk-up apartments dominate the apartment forms of the period, though an occasional early double-loaded corridor apartment, such as the North Park apartments at 577 South 500 East, can also be found in the area.

Depression and Decline (1923-55)

In Central City and surrounding neighborhoods, such as the Avenues and the Bryant neighborhood, numerous single-family homes were renovated to contain multiple apartments or turned into boarding houses (Giraud 2001). Such apartments and boarding houses became increasingly popular during the 1930s, while the city writhed in the throes of the Great Depression. Stand-alone, multi-story apartment building construction also increased dramatically during this period, particularly during the 1920s, with at least 10 major apartment buildings, and many smaller ones, being constructed in the Central City survey area alone.



100 South

During the early post-war period, several of the older homes in the neighborhood were demolished to make way for new single-family and multi-family dwellings.

Among the residential properties, single family dwellings dominate the building stock of the early part of the period while multi-family apartment complexes dominate the residential construction during the latter part of the period.

Many multi-family dwellings were constructed in the Central City neighborhood during this period. Most are apartment complexes, though a few duplexes and triplexes are also present. In the early part of the period double-loaded corridor apartments and corner entrance apartments were the most common form used, and these properties often exhibit Period Revival styles. Examples include the Colonial Revival style Armista apartments at 555 East 100 South, a second Colonial Revival complex at 125 South 600 East, and the English Tudor Revival style Park Manor apartments at 841 South 500 East. Later in this period, other (undefined) apartment forms appeared in the area, and these took on the stylistic designs of the 1940s and early 1950s—Minimal Traditional and Early Ranch styles. Examples of such properties include Minimal Traditional style apartments at 607 East 100 South and 633 East 200 South, and the Early Ranch style apartments at 511 East 700 South.

Erosion of Residential Character (1956 -1995)

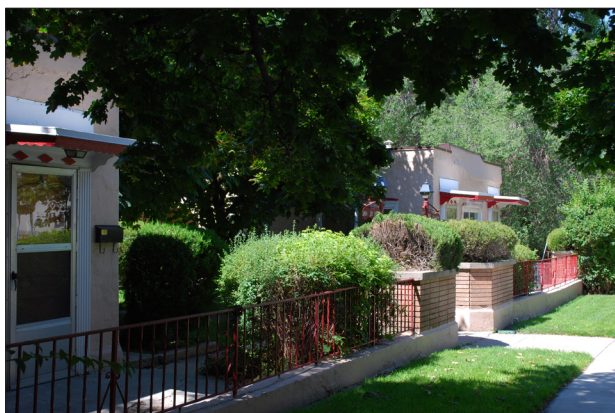
The trend away from owner-occupancy toward rental housing continued in the Central City neighborhood during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. An increasing number of historical single-family dwellings, particularly the larger homes in the northern part of the neighborhood, were subdivided into multiple apartments and converted to rental properties. Redevelopment and affordable housing projects saw the demolition of numerous historical residences to make way for new apartment buildings.

Seventy-eight buildings documented during the Central City survey are estimated to date to this period. The majority of these buildings are commercial structures and multifamily apartment units, many constructed as part of redevelopment and affordable housing projects. Most of the new construction during this period occurred in the central and southern portions of the neighborhood, south of 300 South. In several cases, such as that of four houses along 400 South and at least three houses along 300 South, the new construction resulted in the demolition of historical buildings.

Residential properties in the Central City district from this period are almost exclusively multi-family dwellings. No single family dwellings were identified. The multifamily dwellings comprise apartment complexes exhibiting Ranch/Rambler and Post World War II style during the early part of the period and general Late 20th Century and Mansard styles in the latter part of the period, after 1970. Unlike the apartment complexes of the late 1800s and early 1900s, the complexes of this period typically incorporate off-street parking areas, including carports and similar vehicle shelters. Examples of ca. 1960s Ranch/Rambler style complexes can be seen at 564 East 600 South and 615 East 700 South.



500 East



600 South



600 East

Preservation Vs Progress (1996-2013)

New housing construction has also occurred in the area, primarily in the form of multifamily apartment and condominium complexes built upon lots once occupied either by historical single-family dwellings, such as the case of Vernier Court (335 South) where eight Victorian-era residences were demolished for the construction of a new apartment/condominium complex. However, a small number of new single-family dwellings and attached single-family residential courts (primarily comprised of condominiums) have also appeared in the area in recent years, primarily in the northern portion of the neighborhood.

Thirty buildings documented during the Central City survey are estimated to date to this period. Nearly all of the buildings constructed during this period are commercial structures, though a few are residential properties. Of the residential properties constructed during the period, all but two are multifamily dwellings comprising multi-story apartment courts or condominium courts.

The multifamily dwellings from this period include modern revivals of the historical U-plan concept as well as simple “block” apartments. One example of a U-plan development can be found at 335-343 South 500 East, where a row of Victorian era single family homes along Vernier Court were demolished to make way for the Emigration Court development. Other new developments include the townhouse/condominium tract at 625 East 200 South.

See also: [A Preservation Handbook for Historic Residential Properties & Districts in Salt Lake City, Ch.15 Central City](#)

Architectural Types and Styles

As it has been throughout its history, the pre-modern era building stock (i.e., built during or before 1968) of the Central City district remains primarily residential. Of the 551 historical primary buildings in the district, 93% were built as, and are still used as, residential properties. Of these, 75% were constructed as single family dwellings, and 18% were constructed as multifamily dwellings—mostly duplexes or apartments. Among the buildings constructed as single family dwellings, an estimated 2% have been converted to multifamily units.

Certus Environmental Solutions Central City RL Survey 2013



Armista Apartments



Bell Wines Apartments