

### Ch.16 SOUTH TEMPLE

#### A HISTORY OF APARTMENT AND MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

The following background on the historical development of apartment and other multifamily buildings in South Temple draws directly from the reconnaissance level survey of the district in 2007 and 2013. (Lufkin 2013)

#### Statement of Significance Summary

The South Temple Historic District was designated as locally significant for its collection of houses and other buildings built by prominent architects in the finest styles for the political, religious and commercial leaders of nineteenth and early twentieth century Utah when it was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The district continues to be locally significant for its association with the people who influenced the history and early development of the State of Utah. It also remains significant for its collection of mansions, elegant houses, social clubs and apartment blocks, many of which are the epitome of their style, built by the major architects of Utah. The latest survey amendment extends the period of significance from 1928 to 1964 to include the multifamily residential and commercial buildings constructed during this era. The Bonneville Tower, the first apartment tower and a major building on the street was constructed in 1964, and the period of significance is extended to 1964 to include this building.

The street was built out by the 1920s, and construction since that time, was infill or replacement of existing buildings.

Municipal zoning changes strongly influenced the twentieth century development of South Temple allowing commercial and multi-family usage of the existing structures as well as demolitions and new construction for the new uses. South Temple remains an exceptional street in Utah with its buildings of architectural and historical significance and is still a preferred address in Salt Lake City. The South Temple Historic District continues to contribute significantly to the historic resources of Salt Lake City.

Historically based period revival styles were fashionable in Utah from 1890 to as late as 1940. While small period revival cottages were the most popular house type in Utah in the 1920s and 1930s, the period revival style multifamily buildings from this era include English Tudor apartments, an English cottage duplex house, a Spanish Colonial Revival duplex, and a Colonial Revival apartment building. Bernard O. Mecklenburg, a prominent Utah architect who designed other significant hotels, churches and apartment houses on South Temple in earlier periods, built the Colonial Revival Federal Heights apartments at 1321 in 1929.

The Minimal Traditional (World War II-era) style began to appear in the 1930s and was the major style in Utah in the 1940s and 1950s for residential buildings. An early example of the style is the 1938 red brick duplex on Haxton Place.



*Bellona Apartments*

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## Architectural Styles, Types and Materials from 1928-1963

The major change on the street during the period from 1928 to 1964 was the move away from the construction of single-family dwelling units to that of multiple family dwellings and commercial buildings.



*Federal Heights Apartments*

Residential construction consisted of three duplexes, six apartment buildings and one dormitory. All three duplexes were built at the start of the period in the 1930s. The first, 1204 E South Temple, was built in 1934 in a stucco-covered vernacular Spanish Colonial Revival style in a single story. Two brick duplexes were built on the corner entrances of Haxton Place in 1938, both with their garages underneath the living space. The striated brick English Cottage style example at 926 E South Temple/4 Haxton Place is on the south side, across the street from the striated brick Early Ranch/Minimal Traditional style duplex at 3/7 Haxton Place.

Three apartment buildings were constructed before the United States involvement in World War II began in 1941: the Prairie School/Modern style brick and cast concrete Commodore Apartments at 1107 E South Temple in 1930, the striated brick Federal Heights Apartments at 1321 E South Temple in 1930, and the brick English Tudor style Barbara Worth apartments at 326 E South Temple in 1932.

In the postwar period, three modern apartment buildings were built; the red brick Post War Colonial Revival style building at 1007 E South Temple in 1947, the simple World War II era Minimal Traditional style striated brick building at 848 in 1951, and the Bonneville Tower with 115 units on 15 floors, the pioneer apartment tower on the street at 777 E. South Temple in 1964.

The era from 1965-2013 is outside of the period of significance; however, a few illustrations of structures from this time have been added for informational purposes. The 337-unit Brigham Apartments at 201 E South Temple from 1997 have horizontal massing. New construction continues to fill in any previously vacant lots like the Lotus Apartment building at ca. 338 E South Temple.

### **The Grand Boulevard: Mansions and Churches (1890-1909)**

Salt Lake City's population more than doubled from 44,843 in 1890 to 92,777 in 1910. During this time of rapid growth, the elegant residential area expanded outward to the east along South Temple in what is now the South Temple Historic District, and as well as to the south outside of the district. In addition to mansions and churches, the increasing urban character of Salt Lake City was seen in the development of a few stylish apartment buildings as well as large single family houses.

Land use along South Temple began to change as a number of urban apartment buildings were constructed to accommodate the development of Salt Lake City as an urban center in the 1890s-1930s period, and its rapid population growth. The oldest extant apartment building in the district, the Commodore Apartments, was built in 1902 at 1107 E South Temple and remodeled in 1930. The Bungalow Apartments at 15 S 300 East followed in 1909. They are an example of a basic walk up type of apartment building.



*Mayflower Apartments*



*Maryland Apartments*

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## **Apartments and Club Houses (1910-1929)**

Growth was slow during the early portion of this period as the economic effects of World War I from 1914-1919 retarded construction and economic growth. The introduction of the income tax law in 1913 inhibited the accumulation of the great wealth needed for the construction of South Temple mansions. The postwar 1920s economy recovered, leading to a boom in construction and the increasing use of automobiles for transportation. Many of the building permits in this era were for garages. The population of Salt Lake City increased from 92,777 in 1910 to 140,267 in 1930.

The Planning and Zoning Commission was established to determine land use policy and regulate growth for Salt Lake City in 1924. As a result of its efforts, a zoning ordinance was passed in 1927 with the stated intent “to preserve the character of the city.” At the time of the ordinance, the majority of properties along E South Temple were single family residential dwellings.

Higher residential density was encouraged, however, as no part of the street was zoned for only single family residential use. There were basically three types of zoning areas on east South Temple in this era: the least dense, one and two family residential; greater density, residential with apartments and hotels; and commercial.

The one and two family residential zone, A, covered the east end of the district and extended from M Street to Virginia Street, and from 165 feet west of 1100 East to University Street. The largest area which included one and two family residential, as well as apartments and hotels, zoned B and B2, extended on the south side from 300 South to 165' west of 1100 East, and on the north side from A Street to M Street. Retail stores were allowed in the C, or commercial, zoning area which was found on the east and west sides of E Street. The previously single family residential quality of the street began to change as the new zoning ordinance took effect.

The increasing urbanization of Salt Lake City was evident as a number of elegant multistory apartment buildings were constructed in this era. The extant examples from this period are: the Knickerbocker at 1280 E South Temple in 1911-2, The Maryland/Mecklenberg at 839 E South Temple in 1914, the Neoclassical style Ritz Apartments at 435 E South Temple in 1923, the Hugo at 20 S 1300 East in 1926, the Slack Winburn-designed Mayflower Apartments at 1283 E South Temple in 1927, the Piccadilly at 24 S 500 East, and the Federal Heights by Mecklenberg at 1321 E South Temple, both in 1929. The remaining construction, the majority of the buildings from this period, consisted of single family residences.

### **Zoning Changes and Adaptive Reuse (1930-1961)**

Zoning changes described above encouraged the growth of offices, clinics, clubs, apartment buildings and nursing homes both through new construction and adaptive reuse of existing single family houses. In 1935, the zoning ordinance was amended to enlarge the area available to retail stores and offices from only E Street to along both sides of South Temple from E Street west to State Street. The 1943 Salt Lake City Master Plan defined land uses for the city and attempted to anticipate the predicted postwar surge in population for Salt Lake City. Their efforts encouraged greater density for the South Temple area although the expected population surge did not take place.

Additional zoning changes in the 1950s provided a distinct school zone for Wasatch School on R Street and its playground to the south on South Temple as well as two residential zones, R6 and R5. The R6 zone permitted greater density and different land uses by allowing residences as well as boarding houses, medical clinics and nursing homes. It extended from the eastern edge of the retail and offices zone at E and 500 East to 0 and 165 feet west of 1100 East. The remainder of the street to the east was zoned R5 to allow boarding houses and other residential uses.

A number of existing houses were adapted for reuse in accordance with the new zoning changes. In response to a concern over adaptive reuses in the R6 zone, a new category of R-7 zoning was established in 1956 to allow office buildings. This action ended up encouraging the demolition of existing houses and construction of large office, medical clinic and apartment buildings.

The population of Salt Lake City grew by almost 60,000 in this period, swelling to 189,454, the highest population for the city on record to date. New construction was primarily multifamily housing.

This period saw the construction of twenty structures or resources, or fifteen percent of the total in the district. Some residential construction did occur, mostly in the early part of the era. It consisted of one single family house, three duplexes, four apartment buildings and one dormitory.

Before World War II, two duplexes filled in the remaining lots on Haxton Place in 1938 at 3-7 Haxton Place and the corner of 4 Haxton Place and 926 E South Temple. Another single story duplex went up to the east at 1204 E South Temple in 1934.

There were two apartment buildings constructed before the World War II began in 1941: the Prairie School Commodore Apartments at 1107 E South Temple in 1930, and the English Tudor style Barbara Worth apartments at 326 E South Temple in 1932. The last single family house was a Colonial Revival at 23 Virginia Street in 1938. In the postwar period two modern apartment buildings were built at 1007 E South Temple in 1947, and 848 in 1951.

Holy Cross Hospital built four-stories of dormitory housing for their nurses, the Moreau Building, in 1949 at 1002 E South Temple. The liberal interpretation of the new zoning ordinance was evident in the construction of the Federal Heights Apartments at 1321 E South Temple in 1929, and the Commodore Apartments at 1107 E South Temple in 1930 in the area zoned for one and two family residences.

## Demolition vs. Preservation (1962-2006)

Development pressures on the South Temple area increased during this period. South Temple Street was a desirable address and people again wanted to live and work near the downtown area, close to offices and cultural attractions. Population for the city remained relatively stable during the era, although it decreased slightly in the surrounding neighborhoods.



*Ritz Apartments*



*Commodore Apartments*

In 1961, zoning was changed along South Temple from R6 to R7 from Eighth to Ninth East and from K to M Streets to allow for office buildings. Zoning changes were made again in 1972 to encourage the construction of apartment buildings in the Residential R7 district, rather than office buildings. Adaptive reuse of the older houses continued and a number became nursing homes, clinics, office buildings, and in the 1980s, bed and breakfasts.

The demolition of buildings along South Temple, in particular the Walter Ware-designed 1899 Greek Revival Cosgriff Mansion (also known as the Thomas Weir mansion) for the construction of the Steiner Corporation Building at 508 East South Temple in 1967, was the spur that led to the development of a preservation movement in Salt Lake City.

By 1962, few vacant lots were available so the buildings from this period (30 buildings or 18 percent) were constructed on land previously occupied by older, single-family residential buildings. Zoning changes encouraged the new construction that was primarily for medical clinics, multifamily housing and office buildings. Bonneville Tower with 115 units on 15 floors was the pioneer apartment tower on the street at 777 E South Temple in 1964, followed by the 14-story Governors Plaza condominium tower in 1981 at 560 E South Temple.

The 1925 Jacobethan Revival V.R. Madsen house at 1259 E South Temple was converted to condominiums in 1995, and two new buildings constructed nearby for more condominium apartments (at 1263 E South Temple).

Lufkin, Beatrice *South Temple* RL Survey 2013

**See also:** [A Preservation Handbook for Historic Residential Properties & Districts in Salt Lake City, Ch.16 South Temple](#)