

Design Guidelines for Historic Landscapes in Salt Lake City



A 1909 view looking north from 100 South up 700 East.

PART I Preservation of Historic Parks and Public Lands in Salt Lake City

GENERAL ISSUES, REDESIGN, & NEW CONSTRUCTION

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How to Use the Historic Landscape Design Guidelines

The following guidelines provide the basis for making informed and consistent decisions about the preservation, rehabilitation and treatment of our historic landscape resources. They serve as specific planning and design tools for public and private historic properties, with specific applicability to sites located within the designated historic districts of the City. The guidelines provide recommendations and advice, which is intended to promote the preservation of our historic landscape resources, to help retain the integrity of these places, and to help ensure that the authenticity of our City is retained. The guidelines are practical and easy to understand, which should help the owners and managers of our historic landscapes maintain their properties, which in turn should enhance the value of the sites and increase the livability of our city.

Arrangement & Format of the Design Guidelines

The Salt Lake City Historic Landscapes Guidelines are arranged into three distinct parts or chapters. The chapters are organized in several sections, including introductory and explanatory information, in addition to supplementary resources in the form of additional reference material and suggested maintenance tips.

Chapter One - Preservation of Historic Parks and Public Lands in Salt Lake City provides an overview

of the need and precedence for preserving historic landscapes in Salt Lake City and the relationship to national and local preservation policies and programs.

Chapter Two – General Design Guidelines consists of a detailed review of the contextual, spatial and character-defining features typically addressed as part of a typical landscape preservation assessment. Beginning with definition of key principles and concepts, the chapter concludes with a review of specific design characteristics to be considered, from topography and vegetation to circulation, water features and structures.

Chapter Three – Examples documents the application of the General Design Guidelines to eighteen historic sites. These reports are intended to serve as examples of how to apply the guidelines as well as to provide specific preservation guidance for the eighteen sites¹.

¹ The eighteen sites were selected by Salt Lake City in an effort to catalog, document, and potentially preserve some of the key historic landscapes in the city. They are part of the Salt Lake City Historic Landscapes project, which also documented 38 historic landscapes, some of which also were included in the pilot guideline project.

Chapter 1. Why Preserve our Historic Parks and Landscapes?

Parks and public spaces have been a part of Salt Lake City's history since the time of original settlement. In his Plat of Zion, Brigham Young laid out a system of streets and lots for the City and included four 10-acre blocks as public space. This very forward-thinking concept established a commitment to parks and public spaces that makes Salt Lake City a unique community in the western United States.

This history is an important and valued legacy that continues today as we try to identify, conserve, preserve and maintain the City's important commitment to its people's health and welfare. That is what parks are all about – places for people, families, and groups to gather outdoors, recreate, entertain, remember, exercise, refresh, and reinvigorate minds and bodies. Our parks represent a diverse range of landscapes and experiences - from natural places along creeks, streams, canyons and mountains, to sites with manicured sport fields and a specific emphasis and purpose, and spaces that are developed but un-programmed, where leisure activities are allowed to manifest as people come together.

Our parks and public lands are coveted, needed, valued - and most importantly, used - by residents of all backgrounds, races, religions, ethnicities, incomes and preferences. They are, quite literally, the very best evidence of our place in the world, and

a constant reminder of the legacy upon which Salt Lake City was established nearly 175 years ago.

Times change, needs and interests ebb and flow, political ideas and focus are constantly transforming, yet the need for parks and places for people to gather outdoors remains constant. This is the underlying importance, the over-arching concept, and the big idea that is as true today as it was in the distant past, and the reason it is so important to identify and document our treasured landscapes and places so that they remain a vital part of our community. The legacy must continue, and the vision remain intact as the pages in our history continue to turn.

Chapter 2. The Basis for the Preservation of Historic Landscape Resources in Salt Lake City

The design guidelines for preserving Salt Lake City's Historic Parks and Public Lands² are rooted in the historic preservation traditions, practices and policies of the City, which are aligned with and emanate from national practices and traditions.

The National Historic Landscape Preservation Precedent

The design guidelines for Salt Lake City's Historic Parks and Public Lands embrace the U.S. Secretary of the Interior guidance on preservation planning and the treatment of cultural landscapes, which is summarized in the NPS publication *Preservation Brief #36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes*³. According to this publication, **cultural landscapes** are described as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." The brief further describes **historic landscapes** as being "composed of a number of character-defining features which, individually or collectively contribute to the landscape's physical appearance as they have evolved over time. In

² It should be noted that the selected sites range significantly in the level of historic significance, which had direct bearing on the guidelines that resulted for each site.

³ <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/36-cultural-landscapes.htm>

addition to vegetation and topography, cultural landscapes may include water features, such as ponds, streams, and fountains; circulation features, such as roads, paths, steps, and walls; buildings; and furnishings, including fences, benches, lights and sculptural objects. The brief indicates that there are four major types of cultural landscapes, two of which are most relevant to Salt Lake City, as described below⁴.

Historic Designed Landscape

This is a landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or by an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. These landscapes may be associated with a significant person(s), trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Local examples include Liberty Park and the Utah State Capitol grounds. This is the most common cultural/historic landscape type in Salt Lake City.

⁴ The two types of cultural landscape types which are less relevant for the Salt Lake City context include the Historic Vernacular Landscape, which is a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape; and the Ethnographic Landscape, which includes a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Both are relatively uncommon in Salt Lake City, which is dominated by landscapes that have emerged as result of human settlement and urban development.

Historic Site

This is a landscape that is significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person. A local example is the Brigham Young Family Cemetery.

Preservation Theory

The Concept of Historic Significance

In general, landscapes must be at least 50 years old before they can be evaluated for potential historic significance, although exceptions do exist when a more recent site is significant. Historic landscapes must have qualities that give them significance. A landscape 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 or design associated with distinctive characteristics of landscape type, period, or construction method.
- An example of a landscape 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 landscape is significant because it represents, or is associated with, a particular period in history. Frequently, this period begins with the construction of a site and continues through the peak of its early use. Site 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 site must also have integrity. To have integrity, a sufficient percentage of the site must date from the period of significance, and its character-defining features must also remain intact. It is these elements that allow a landscape to be identified as representing a particular period in the history of the City.

Treatments for Cultural Landscapes

Landscape treatments can range from simple and inexpensive preservation actions to complex restoration or reconstruction projects. The progressive framework is inverse in proportion to the retention of historic features and materials. Generally, preservation involves the least change, and is the most respectful of historic materials. It maintains the form and material of the existing landscape. Rehabilitation usually accommodates contemporary alterations or additions without altering significant historic features or materials, with successful projects involving minor to major change. Restoration or reconstruction attempts to recapture the appearance of a property, or an individual feature at a particular point in time, as

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confirmed by detailed historic documentation. These last two treatments most often require the greatest degree of intervention and thus, the highest level of documentation.

If a historic landscape is determined to have historically important features, the following are options to be considered:

Preservation

The act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation

The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical or cultural values.

Restoration

The act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means

of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction

The act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

In all cases, treatment should be executed at the appropriate level, reflecting the condition of the landscape, with repair work identifiable upon close inspection and/or indicated in supplemental interpretative information. When repairing or replacing a feature, every effort should be made to achieve visual and physical compatibility. Historic materials should be matched in design, scale, color and texture.

Other considerations which should be addressed when developing appropriate guidelines for historic landscapes include the following:

A landscape with a high level of integrity and authenticity may suggest preservation as the primary treatment.

Preservation treatments may emphasize protection, stabilization, cyclical maintenance, and repair of

character-defining landscape features. Changes over time that are part of the landscape's continuum and are significant in their own right may be retained, while changes that are not significant, yet do not encroach upon or erode character may also be maintained. Preservation entails the essential operations to safeguard existing resources.

Rehabilitation is often selected in response to a contemporary use or need—ideally such an approach is compatible with the landscape's historic character and historic use.

Rehabilitation may preserve existing fabric along with introducing some compatible changes, new additions and alterations. Rehabilitation may be desirable at a private residence in a historic district where the homeowner's goal is to develop an appropriate landscape treatment for a front yard, or in a public park where a support area is needed for its maintenance operations.

When the most important goal is to portray a landscape at an exact period of time, restoration is selected as the primary treatment.

Unlike preservation and rehabilitation, interpreting the landscape's continuum or evolution is not the objective. Restoration may include the removal of features from other periods and/or the construction of missing or lost features and materials from the reconstruction period. In all cases, treatment should be substantiated by the historic research findings and existing conditions documentation. Restoration and re-construction treatment work should avoid the creation of a landscape whose features did not

exist historically. For example, if features from an earlier period did not co-exist with extant features from a later period that are being retained, their restoration would not be appropriate.

In rare cases, when evidence is sufficient to avoid conjecture, and no other property exists that can adequately explain a certain period of history, reconstruction may be utilized to depict a vanished landscape.

The accuracy of this work is critical. In cases where topography and the sub-surface of soil have not been disturbed, research and existing conditions findings may be confirmed by thorough archeological investigations. Here too, those features that are intact should be repaired as necessary, retaining the original historic features to the greatest extent possible. The greatest danger in reconstruction is creating a false picture of history.

False historicism in every treatment should be avoided.

This applies to individual features as well as the entire landscape. Examples of inappropriate work include the introduction of historic-looking benches that are actually a new design, a fanciful gazebo placed in what was once an open meadow, executing an unrealized historic design, or designing a historic-looking landscape for a relocated historic structure within "restoration."

Local Precedence – the Salt Lake City Preservation Program

Salt Lake City Municipal Corporation takes pride in its history, and considers historic preservation a priority and commitment. The Salt Lake City Historic Preservation Program is operated through the Planning Division. It is a process of protecting local history through identification of unique places that “tell” the City’s story. It has a specific aim to preserve areas of the City that are uniquely historic providing tools to stabilize neighborhoods and areas that are connected by historic characteristics. The program offers an array of tools, programs and incentives to assist in protecting the best examples of the City’s cultural landscapes, architecture, commercial and residential development and archaeology for the benefit of future generations. The process may include the survey and evaluation of historical, architectural, archaeological and cultural resources; the development of appropriate measures to protect those resources; the identification of public and private funding sources; the design for the restoration, rehabilitation, and/or adaptive re-use and review of ongoing maintenance (Historic; Preservation). The Historic Landmark Commission conducts design reviews of proposed new construction, alterations and demolitions to existing historic sites and resources located in local historic districts. Additional recommendations for new sites are also considered through the commission⁵.

⁵ See <http://www.slcgov.com/historicpreservation>

Certified Local Government (CLG) Status

Salt Lake City has agreed to support the principles of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes (see Appendix 1). As such, the city maintains status as a Certified Local Government under the National Historic Preservation Act⁶.

City Policies & Ordinances Underlying the Historic Landscape Design Guidelines

The Salt Lake City Community Preservation Plan provides a comprehensive policy and associated implementation plan for the preservation program in the city. The Community Preservation Plan is grounded in nationally established preservation standards, including the requirements for evaluating current and potential historic and cultural resources.

The Historic Landscape Design Guidelines form a key part of the array of tools available to the City in the role of caring for historic landscape assets⁷. They are founded on the goals for preservation as stated in the Salt Lake City Zoning Ordinance Title 21A of the Salt Lake City Code, Chapter 34.020 Purpose Statement⁸, which provides for the creation

⁶ The National Historic Preservation Act provides that a local government, when it meets certain guidelines for operation of a preservation program, may become so certified and therefore eligible for receiving technical and financial assistance to administer its preservation activities.

⁷ Other guidelines address residential, commercial and signage.

⁸ see http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book_id=672

and management of historic preservation overlay districts and landmarks).

The Historic Landscape Design Guidelines are intended to be used in a number of ways. Property owners and managers should use the guidelines when beginning a project. City staff will use the guidelines when designing City-owned property, advising property owners and in administrative reviews. The Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) will use the guidelines in review when considering the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Compliance with the ordinance standards is enforced through the city's permitting and inspection processes, including the building permit review system. Property owners should recognize that most projects require a building permit, which is issued by the city's building official, in addition to the Certificate of Appropriateness that is issued by the HLC, or Planning Department staff on its behalf.

The Importance of Consistency

The Salt Lake City Historic Landscape Design Guidelines have been developed to provide a rational and consistent basis for making informed decisions about the treatment of historic landscapes. They also serve as an informational, educational, and planning resource for City Staff, property owners and managers, and design professionals who intend to modify historic landscapes. The guidelines are intended to help explain and promote sound preservation practices related to the historic landscape heritage of the City, which are fragile and are consequently vulnerable to alteration

and demolition as development trends change, neighborhood populations and community attitudes go through transitions, and the natural environment experiences transformation.

Chapter 3.

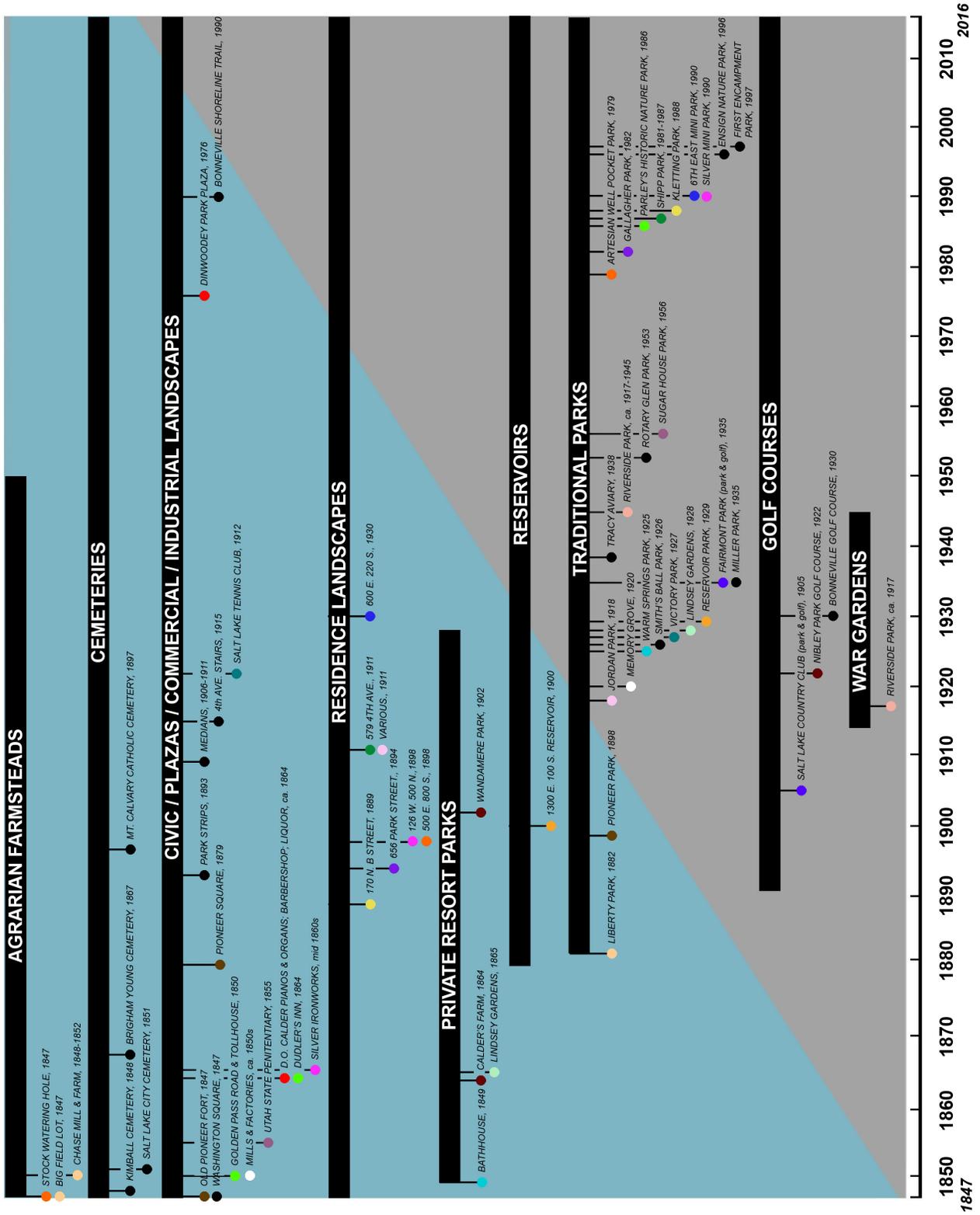
Overview of Historic Landscapes in Salt Lake City

Salt Lake City contains a rich collection of stories regarding its historical landscapes, enhancing the city, and helping to establish its identity and “sense of place” through clues and reminders of the city’s evolution and sequence of development.

The following timeline provides a brief snapshot of key events and changes that have taken place since the arrival of early settlers, with direct reference to 38 historic landscapes in Salt Lake City. It is a synopsis of how the Salt Lake City landscape has evolved over time, from earliest settlement and the establishment of agrarian farmsteads through the establishment of the city and the development of parks and cemeteries and the implementation of residential, civic, commercial and industrial landscapes. While the timeline makes reference to a wide range of typologies, it is not exhaustive and other historical landscapes may exist or have existed which are not indicated.

SALT LAKE CITY HISTORIC LANDSCAPES TIMELINE

- 38 Selected Sites -



NOTE: The following park sites were not illustrated due to lack of information regarding dates when established: 5th Avenue Park & Swede Town Park.