DESIGN GUIDELINES
FOR
POCATELLO’S DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

A Guide for Property Owners

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Acknowledgment

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Introduction

Valuing the historic buildings that are located in the Pocatello Downtown Historic District is critical to forming the city’s character and sense of place. Additionally, valuing historic buildings helps to preserve and stabilize property values. The buildings and their location demonstrate Pocatello’s history that grew as a result of the railroad. The intent of these guidelines is to preserve the historic qualities of the District while allowing the District to remain vital and fluid so it is livable by today’s standards.

These design guidelines establish quality development in the Downtown Historic District. Owners can accomplish this goal through alterations which are harmonious with the character of the District. The design principles embodied in these guidelines encourage creative solutions that will enhance the character of the District. Historic preservation is not about slowing or hindering development, but rather enhancing the special value of what we already have.

The purpose of these guidelines is to acquaint the public with the procedures to apply for any permits within the Pocatello Downtown Historic District. The guidelines also explain the standards the Pocatello Historic Preservation Commission and the Pocatello City Council will use in evaluating preservation projects and other construction within the Pocatello Downtown Historic District. The map on page 5 details the boundaries of the Pocatello Downtown Historic District.

These guidelines are intended to assist persons planning historic preservation projects, they are not meant to give specific advice for specific construction tasks. For example, these guidelines do not specify which features of an historic building are important and must be preserved as part of the building’s historical character. These guidelines do not detail which features might be altered, if necessary, to accommodate the building’s new use.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a voluntary advisory board for the City of Pocatello whose members have a demonstrated interest and knowledge in historic preservation and was established in 1985. Their purpose is to conduct surveys of local historic properties; recommend methods and procedures to preserve, restore, maintain, and operate historic properties under the ownership or control of the City; recommend the lease, sale, other transfer or disposition of historic properties; participate in the conduct of land use, urban renewal and other planning processes undertaken by governmental agencies; recommend ordinances and provide information for the purposes of historic preservation; promote and conduct an education program on historic preservation; and review and act upon applications for permits for building alteration, new construction, or demolition within designated historic districts. The Commission also plays a vital role in the City’s downtown revitalization efforts.

The designation of a local historic property, landmark, or district may be initiated by a request from the City Council, the owner(s) of the property, or the HPC. In order to be designated as a local historic property, landmark, or district certain criteria must be met including, but not limited to, site of a historical event, exhibits the characteristic architectural style of a recognized historical era, or is the work of an architect, designer, craftsman or builder whose individual work has had significant influence.

Those planning extensive rehabilitation projects should seek assistance from the HPC and from qualified historic preservation professionals before undertaking their projects. Such professionals may include archaeologists, architects, architectural historians, historians, and others who are skilled in preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring historic properties.
The Pocatello Downtown Historic District encompasses most of the downtown area on the Westside of the Union Pacific railroad tracks and a small area on the eastside along East Center Street (see map on page 5). The district is comprised primarily of one-, two- and three-story commercial buildings. The first floors are generally occupied by retail businesses; the top floors provide office space, storage, and long-term housing. The general appearance and density of development in the district is typical of mid-sized western cities. Most buildings are contiguous and share common side walls.

A variety of architectural styles is represented in the district, including Gothic Revival (Trinity Episcopal Church at 248 North Arthur and Congregational Church at 309 North Garfield), Romanesque Revival (Seavers Building at 101 North Main), Sullivanesque (Carlson Building), Richardson Romanesque (Idaho Furniture Building at 102 North Main), Italian Renaissance Revival (Franklin Building at 124 North Main), Neo-Classical Revival (Valentine Building at Center and Arthur), and art deco as well as many adaptations of early twentieth century commercial styles with classical details rendered in either tin or terra cotta.

![Idaho Furniture Building at 102 North Main Street](image)
Historic Design Review

All changes to a building's exterior (paint, signs, fabric, materials, windows, doors, awnings, canopies, etc.) require design review by the Historic Preservation Commission prior to the issuance of any required permits prior to the undertaking of work on the project.

1. Application: File a complete Certification of Appropriateness application with the City of Pocatello's Planning & Development Services Department (234-6184). The Commission shall consider all applications for certificates of appropriateness within twenty-one (21) days of filing with the Planning & Development Services Department. **should we have a staff review level**

2. Meeting: Present proposal to the Historic Preservation Commission (1\textsuperscript{st} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} Wednesdays of each month at 7 PM). Include samples of materials and colors and detailed drawings and color photographs.

3. Permit: After HPC approval, obtain appropriate permits from the City as required.

NOTE: The HPC and staff are available to discuss preliminary proposals with applicants and may offer assistance in developing a final design solution.
Secretary of the Interior Standards

The general guidelines for rehabilitation projects to be used in the Pocatello Downtown Historic District are the Standards of the Secretary of the Interior of the United States (36 CFR 67). The Standards for Rehabilitation are as follows:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and special relationships.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and special relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary or physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be impaired.
Applying the Standards

Rehabilitation of a building in the Pocatello Downtown Historic District will likely necessitate some repair or alteration of the historic building in order to provide for an efficient contemporary use. However, these repairs and alterations should not damage or destroy the materials and features—including their finishes—that are important in defining the building's historic character.

For each rehabilitation or restoration project, a two-part evaluation needs to be completed. First, particular materials and exterior features that are important in defining a property's historic character should be identified. Examples may include a building’s walls, cornice, window sash and frames, roof, stairs, a site’s walkways, fences, and gardens. The second part of the evaluation should consist of an assessment of the potential impact of the work on the structure itself. A basic assumption in this process is that projects must be examined and evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The historic character of each property is unique, and rehabilitation work acceptable for one project may be unacceptable for another. Therefore each building project must be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Types of Projects Requiring Permits

Because no list of projects requiring a permit can be complete, decisions on whether a specific project requires a permit will be rendered by the staff liaison for the Pocatello Historic Preservation Commission or the Planning & Development Services Department staff. Alterations within the Pocatello Downtown Historic District requiring approval include any façade alteration, any change to the exterior of any building or site, walkways, fences or gardens visible from the street, and changes in signage.

Procedures

A. For Obtaining a Permit for New Construction, Building Alteration or Demolition Within the Downtown Historic District:

In order to preserve the integrity of the Pocatello Downtown Historic District, no exterior portion or feature of any buildings, sites, structures, or objects shall be demolished or altered, no new construction shall be undertaken, and no signs shall be erected until an application for a certificate of appropriateness is submitted for and approved by the Pocatello Historic Preservation Commission. An application for new construction, building alteration, or demolition shall contain the following information:

1. A clear statement of the proposed work, to include such matters as colors, materials, landscaping, and signs.
2. Plans showing the size, height, and completed appearance of the proposed work.
3. A site plan showing all existing and adjacent buildings and structures and the proposed work.
4. In cases where the application is for a demolition, the necessity for the demolition shall be justified (See Section B., below).
5. Any other information deemed necessary by the Commission.

In reviewing applications for permits for new construction, building alteration, or demolition for buildings, sites, structures, and objects within the Pocatello Downtown Historic District, the Commission will consider the following factors:

1. Adverse impacts to the historical integrity of the property or structure shall be minimized.
   a. Changes to the defining characteristics of the building or site shall be minimized.
   b. Removal of historic materials and features of the building or site shall be avoided.
   c. Historic materials shall be retained where possible; where not feasible, compatible materials shall be encouraged.

2. The proposed work shall be compatible with the property or structure itself, as well as to the surrounding neighborhood or district. Consideration shall be given to exterior design, site layout, proportion, detail, scale, color, texture, and materials.

3. Landscaping shall be compatible with the historic character of the property itself, as well as the surrounding neighborhood or district.

4. The style, materials, size and locations of signs shall be compatible with the historic character and scale of the property or structure as well as the surrounding neighborhood or district.

5. The HPC must consider the property's physical condition, suitability for preservation or restoration; educational value; cost for preservation or restoration; cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance, operation, or repairs; possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property, appraised value and administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs.

Seavers Building 101 N. Main Street
B. For Obtaining a Permit for Partial or Total Demolition within the Designated Historic District:

As outlined in the provisions of Municipal Code 15.38.140, applications for total or partial demolition of a locally designated historic property shall be submitted by the owner of the property to the Planning and Development Services Department and shall contain all information required for a certificate of appropriateness as set forth above. In addition, demolition applications must be accompanied by a detailed structural analysis conducted by a licensed architect or structural engineer. The reasons for the building's demolition and the urgency, if any, for doing so must be fully set out in writing. Any emergency demolition ordered by the Building Official may take place without review by the Commission, but the Building Official shall notify the Commission of any such order.

The Commission shall hold a public hearing within forty-five days after the Planning & Development Services Department's receipt of a complete application for demolition. Notice of the time, place, and purpose of such hearing shall be given at least fifteen days prior to the hearing by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the City and by written notice by first class mail to the applicant and property owners within a three hundred foot radius of the applicant's property lines.

The Commission may, at its own expense, secure its own professional evaluation of the building. The owner must provide access for such an evaluation during regular business hours or at such other time as is mutually agreeable, or the request ** for what?** may be denied.

Within fifteen days following completion of such hearing, the Commission shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application for a demolition permit based on the testimony and materials presented. In the case of approval, or approval with conditions, additional bond coverage or irrevocable letter of credit or other appropriate guarantee deemed acceptable by the City may be required to ensure completion of the work as approved, including removal of debris and restoration of the land to a neat and orderly condition. All demolition decisions of the Commission shall be in writing and include findings of fact and conclusions of law and a copy shall be sent to the applicant by first class mail and a copy transmitted to the Building Department of the City, which Department shall issue any permit approved by the Commission, providing applicable State, Federal, and City regulations have been complied with.

Extension of this time period may only occur by mutual consent of the owner and the Commission. Any applicant aggrieved by a determination of the Commission may appeal to the City Council by written request submitted to the Planning & Development Services Department within forty-five days of the date of the written decision.
Goals for Rehabilitation Projects

The following examples may be used in implementing the standards and procedures listed on the preceding pages.

Goal 1: Exterior alterations and changes should be kept to a minimum.

Windows and doors add architectural interest to buildings. The openings are typically vertical and repeated at regular intervals. Their rhythms and patterns provide character to the historic district and should be retained.
Windows should be repaired whenever possible rather than replaced. New frames must match the proportions of the original. In most cases, wood is the historically appropriate and preferred window frame material.

**Goal 2.** The building should conform to surrounding buildings and other street features.

Along any block of a historical district, the buildings typically form a unified block of structure. To maintain unity within blocks, buildings should conform to the height and scale of neighboring buildings.

Spacing between buildings and setbacks should be uniform. Restoring old buildings is preferable to razing them.
Goal 3. Every effort should be made to maintain and preserve the building's original materials and colors.

![Preferable](image1)

![Not preferable](image2)

Historic districts usually contain similar building materials. Sidings should be avoided because they destroy or obscure the building's original details and materials. If certain features have deteriorated beyond repair, replacement material should, as much as possible, replicate the original. The choice of colors for building exteriors should be consistent with the historic character of the building and its surroundings. Scraping or chipping paint with a penknife helps to determine the original color. Since the paint will be faded, a better idea of the original color will be obtained by moistening it slightly.

Goal 4. Original and distinctive architectural details should be retained or restored.

![Original architectural details](image3)

Brick and stone upper façades and cornices are assets to the visual interest and uniformity of the street. Historic photographs can frequently be used to determine the design details of the original façade. If the original architectural details of the building must be repaired, they should not be substantially altered in their materials or their shapes.
Goal 5. Signs should be architecturally compatible with the design of the original or proposed building.

Signs, graphics, and awnings become highly visible parts of the building’s exterior and should contribute to the overall attractiveness of the building and surroundings. Signs should be compatible with the building’s design and must not obscure details of the building’s façade. Signs should not be placed in such a way that they obscure architectural details and should be placed in locations that would traditionally have been used for signage. Signs should conform in shape, size, materials, and colors with Municipal Code Chapter 15.20.230.

First Congregational Church at 309 North Garfield
A Checklist

Use this checklist for self-evaluation of your project prior to seeking approval of the Pocatello Historic Preservation Commission:

1. Are exterior alterations and changes to the building's original features kept to a minimum? _____ YES  _____ NO  X

2. Do your plans relate favorable to the building's surroundings? X

3. Are the building's original materials and colors retained or restored? X

4. Are original and distinctive architectural details retained or restored? X

5. Are your signs architecturally compatible with the design of the original or proposed building? X

If you answer "yes" to these questions, your plans will probably receive the Commission's approval. If you answer "no," you probably need to reconsider your plans.

Carlson Building at 105 North Arthur
KEY POINTS
FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT. In general, after property research & evaluation has been done, recognize the original character of the work being renovated or added to, and attempt to recall (not imitate) this essential character. Do not attempt to create a new historical work, but instead recall the essence of the original in material, proportion, scale, and detail. Do not debase history by attempting to recreate it or making conjectural changes.

ADAPTIVE USE encourages study of new usages for existing properties, if such uses seem appropriate in order to keep the property a functioning part of the urban scene. This may require a study of existing codes and restrictions in order to accomplish an adaptive use project. Avoid changes in historic fabric wherever possible (interior and exterior).

PARKING is perhaps the most troublesome issue in urban design. Many alternatives are known. The choice made should recognize that the historic structures are most significant while the car is secondary. Both on-street and off-street parking must be studied. Municipal parking codes must be observed and can be adapted to meet the goals of maintaining an historic landscape character. Small parking group development is encouraged while landscaping of large parking areas can aid in reducing the impact of the car.
PROPORTION is a ratio that relates dimensions of a shape or form (e.g., height to width). Although the proportion of the historic district varies, the main emphasis is vertical. An entire block can be horizontal in proportion while its parts are vertical.

SCALE involves two aspects. First is the matter of "human scale" or the attempt by the observer to comprehend the apparent size of a building relative to the human size, by reading such things as stairs, window heads, doors, and landscaping. Secondly, there is "consistent scale" of all the parts making up a building which unify the overall proportions of the building.

PATTERN AND RHYTHM. Pattern is established by the arrangement of similar things in a regular and repetitive manner, in a way that is seen and can be repeated.

Rhythm requires that a clear pattern be sensed and used to organize the façade or group of façades.
POTENTIAL EXPOSURE can be missed by failure to recognize the need to visually organize the rear walls of Main Street stores as they interface with Union Pacific Avenue through the use of pattern, color, or texture, in order to enhance the Main Street stores and the view from the railroad parking areas. There has been some emphasis in this direction. Lighting, proper signage, graphics, awnings, and color would help to "clean-up" this area, and make this important first view of the area a more pleasant experience.

AWNINGS can provide many benefits (i.e., color, signage, shade, pedestrian protection, emphasis to special features). Awnings can also be used to hide elements which cannot be reproduced, are missing, or are of less interest. Special care must be taken to ensure that no key elements of the façade are covered up in an inappropriate manner. Awnings should be designed to harmonize with various segments of the building i.e. bays rather than long continuous coverage. Avoid fixed bubble or umbrella-type designs.
BUILDING GRIDS are recognizable within the historic district. Horizontally, the buildings are located at the edge of the grid with very few buildings not on the property line. Vertically the buildings are within the one- to four-story range. The vertical changes are typically one-story changes between adjacent buildings. This existing “orthogonal” grid should be recognized and observed in placement of buildings in an effort to continue the historic pattern of the downtown streets.

SIGNAGE is a very important element of any building, particularly for historic structures. Signage shall be in harmony with the architectural emphasis of the building. The signs should be in such locations as a lintel band, clerestory/transom windows, or within decorative moldings that create natural framing and integration of signs. Sign colors, materials, size, shape, and lighting methods should reinforce the overall composition of the façade. Historically accurate materials are preferred for signs within the historic district. All signs should conform to the Municipal Code (specifically Section 15.20.230 which relates to the historic district).

Common Historic Sign Types: Signs are an important part of a commercial district. Like building architecture, sign designs have changed with the times. Below are some examples of common sign types within the period of significance of the Downtown Historic District (information from U.S. Department of Interior Preservation Brief #25: The Preservation of Historic Signs).

Fascia Signs – These signs are placed on the horizontal band located between the storefront and 2nd story or cornice. Because this type of signage was so common, many buildings are specifically designed with a place where a fascia sign can be placed.

These signs are typically very narrow and usually contain little more than the name of the business and perhaps a street number.

Window Signs – Advertisements were often painted or etched on the glass in windows, doors and transoms. Goldleaf was a common material used in window signs.

Awning Signs – The fringe or skirt of the awning, as well as the panel at the side, were typical places for a business’ name or street number to be listed.

Symbolic Signs – Symbolic signs date back to a time when much of the population could not read. A sheep signified a tailor, a tankard a tavern, a red and white striped pole signified a barbershop, and three gold balls signified a pawn shop.

Symbolic signs that include pictures or shapes that represent products are often seen in historic districts and contribute to a “quaint” atmosphere.
Hanging or Projecting Signs – These signs contained both lettered and symbolic advertisements. Projecting signs were often paired and placed at a 45-degree angle to increase visibility. Projecting signs were very common in the early days of downtown Pocatello.

Lighting – Before internally illuminated plastic signs became common, signs were generally illuminated by light shining onto them. Some larger signs were created from light bulbs arranged to form symbols and words. Neon first appeared in signs in the 1920’s and reached the height of popularity in the 1940’s.

Glossary

Alteration: The addition to, removal of or from, or change in appearance of any exterior part or portion of an historic property or landmark or property within an historic district, or a change to the interior of an historic property or landmark that affects the exterior appearance of such, not including normal maintenance and repair.

Compatible Use: Minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or using a property for its original use.

Cornice: The molded and projecting horizontal member that forms the top part of an architectural composition.

Demolition: Razing, destroying, dismantling, defacing, or in any other manner causing partial or total ruin of an historic property or landmark.

Exterior: Any portion of the outside of an historic property, structure, or landmark that can be seen from a public place. In the case of outdoor signs, their style, material, size, location, and number.

Facade: The exterior walls of a building or landmark, particularly one of its main sides facing a public way or space, usually given special architectural treatment.

Historic District: Any commercial area that includes or encompasses such sites, landmarks, buildings, structures, or objects as determined by the Pocatello Historic Preservation Commission to be appropriate for historic preservation.

Historic Preservation: The research, protection, restoration, and rehabilitation of buildings, objects, districts, areas, and sites significant in the history, architecture, archaeology, or culture of Pocatello, of Idaho, or of the United States.

New Construction: Erecting a new building or structure on a vacant parcel of land, altering the exterior of existing buildings or structures, moving a previously built building or structure onto a vacant parcel of land, erecting outdoor signs, or changing façades within an historic district.

Preservation: The process of sustaining the form and extent of a structure essentially as it now exists. Preservation aims at halting further deterioration and providing structural stability but does not contemplate significant rebuilding.

Reconstruction: The process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished structure, or part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time. Reconstruction should
be undertaken only when the property to be reconstructed is essential for understanding and interpreting the value of an historic district and sufficient documentation exists to insure an exact reproduction of the original.

Rehabilitation: The restoration of a property previously in a dilapidated or substandard condition for human habitation or use to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, that makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property that are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

Restoration: The process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property as it appeared at a per at a particular period of time by removing later work and by replacing missing original work.

Window Head: A horizontal cross member at the top of a window frame, in a variety of forms, as semicircles, arches or triangular shapes. Some have decorative moldings on the head and jambs, while sills are left plain to shed water.