

Boise City Historic Preservation Plan 2010

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Mission Statement

This plan aims to help the City engage in a Historic Preservation program to promote, preserve, and protect Boise's historic buildings, sites, neighborhoods and structures that provide visual markers for the City's cultural, archeological, and architectural heritage. It also aims to integrate Historic Preservation with the City's environmental stewardship and other goals set out in Boise's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Introduction

Boise City Council passed the Historic Preservation Ordinance on April 19, 1976. As in many other American cities during the 1960s and 1970s, urban renewal had claimed much of the historic fabric of this frontier town through the process of redevelopment and other nation-wide efforts to breathe life back into cities that had been deserted by the widespread move to suburbia. The wholesale demolition of many of Boise's architecturally and culturally significant landmarks prompted a widespread demand for a program of historic preservation to save remaining structures and neighborhoods of importance. The new ordinance set out to begin a program of historic preservation for the City of Boise. It created the City's Historic Preservation Commission, which just a few years later in 1979 adopted the City's first Historic Preservation Plan,¹ a document that has served the City well in the ensuing 30 years as its foundation of historic preservation.

The existence of the 1979 Historic Preservation Plan provided support for the City to pass numerous ordinances designed to give the newly created Commission tools for preservation. Today in 2010, the Commission has multiple tools at its disposal to protect historic properties, including local Historic and Conservation Districts, façade easements, and landmark designations. City Council has used these tools wisely over the years, designating nine (9) neighborhoods as local Historic Districts since that time, 2 as Historic Conservation Districts, (Big Sky Neighborhood is another one but not for historic reasons) 32 structures as city landmarks, and accepting eight (8) historic façade easements. In addition, the City has adopted and regularly updates Design Guidelines for both its residential and commercial historic districts that guide the alteration of historic structures as well as construction of new buildings inside those districts.

As a local commissioner once said during public hearings about the creation of a new district, there are only two times that the creation of Historic Districts can obtain widespread support: either when the neighborhoods are on their way up, or when they are on their way down. Some areas of Boise with a high percentage of qualifying buildings were set aside as local Historic Districts soon after the passage of the 1979 plan, a time when older urban neighborhoods were in serious decline in the face of suburban sprawl. The first Commissioners set out to preserve Boise's aging downtown commercial districts first. Following those actions, preservation activists in Boise's North End neighborhood advocated the creation of historic districts in both the Hyde Park commercial area on 13th Street as well as on parts of Harrison Boulevard, both of which were given historic district protection in the 1980s.² The Commission also designated a portion of Warm Springs Avenue in the

City's East End as a local historic district in 1996. Before the City created the districts, many of these areas had lower home prices than Boise's average and were suffering from homeowner neglect. From the 1960s on, more affluent families increasingly deserted these "streetcar suburbs," so called because of their proximity to urban streetcar lines at the turn of the 20th century, and moved to the foothills or into new suburban subdivisions.³ Gradually, other historic districts were added, such as the residential part of the North End neighborhood which lies east of Harrison Boulevard. The City created many of these districts as part of a larger effort to stem the tide of suburbanization and to revitalize its older urban neighborhoods. The success of the early historic districts led to a major turnaround in these Boise neighborhoods.

In the early 2000s, the City created additional districts. It was during a time when older neighborhoods were surging in popularity and land values were increasing faster than home values. Boise's explosive population growth in the 1990s and early 2000s brought a desire to live closer to urban centers, bringing many residents back to Boise's historic North and East End neighborhoods and resulting in soaring property values. These urban landscapes enjoyed a new popularity because of the amenities they brought: wide streets, mature trees and landscaping, easy access to downtown, and proximity to the recreation-rich foothills. In those areas of the larger East and North Ends that were not yet protected by Historic overlays, a new round of demolition took place. Many historic homes were either remodeled insensitively or simply torn down to build larger homes that maximized lot coverage and were generally out of keeping with surrounding structures. This major upswing in popularity provoked a demand from residents for historic district protection. *[See image 1 and 2 (Image 1, 24th St., Image 2, Straughn St.)*

In addition to the many structures protected by the City's official historic districts, there have been other significant historic preservation successes over the last 30 years in Boise, and individuals who have been important in their own right for the efforts they have made to save Boise's historic structures. One example was the preservation of the Egyptian Theatre, built in 1927. This was one of myriad buildings designed by famous architectural firm Tourtellotte & Hummel (see Architecture in Boise on page 14 below) that was threatened with demolition in the 1970s. It had suffered some neglect; its original tan stucco walls had been whitewashed, and the adjacent buildings were also torn down. Thanks to a passionate community effort, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Today the building continues to serve as a community gathering place for cultural events. *(See Image 3, Ada Theatre, and Image 3, Ada Theatre)*

Some individuals, as well, have been instrumental to preserving Boise's architectural history. Ken Howell, a local architect and developer, has taken advantage of federal tax incentives to renovate and preserve a number of very important buildings in Boise, including the Romanesque style Union Block Building, which lies on the 700 block of Idaho Street and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, and the Idanha Hotel, Boise's only French Chateau style building that has undergone myriad changes in its 110 year history and stands today as a modern apartment building with restaurants on the main level and an art gallery and bar underground. Both of these are protected by a façade easement that Howell donated to the City. Others, such as Joan Carley, have

also spearheaded large area preservation efforts for which they have been awarded by the community. (See Image 5, Historic Idanha Hotel)

Another very important victory for the City was the preservation of Boise High School in the 1990s. Because this structure was outside the boundaries of any local historic district, the City had no regulatory overview of it. Instead, residents of Boise's North and East Ends fought to save the elegant building, which was slated for demolition and replacement by a high school five miles away from the neighborhood. The nearly 100-year old school, also built by Tourtellotte & Hummel, not only exhibited classic architecture with Ionic columns and a beautifully detailed auditorium, but also had status as a community icon. The school's auditorium hosted countless cultural events over the years, and Boise High's location on the edge of downtown and in close proximity to the residential neighborhoods from which it drew its students allowed biking and walking as central forms of transportation.⁴ The outcry from the City's residents and the advocacy work by the North End Neighborhood Association and many Boise High parents resulted in the preservation of the original school, and a tasteful, compatible addition that brought the school into the 21st century while also solving its overcrowding problem. (See Image 6, Boise High School)

Boise High, the Union Block, and the Egyptian Theater were only three of the many successful preservation efforts over the years. But in spite of the many historic preservation successes in Boise over the past 30+ years, there have been a number of significant losses that have occurred, as well. The history of Boise High's preservation provides an important lesson for preservation in the City of Boise and points both to the limits of Boise's official role as well as the power of grass-roots advocacy rooted in logical (and proven) economic reasoning. In many of the situations where historic buildings have been lost, the City's hands have been tied due to lack of regulatory oversight. This was true for many downtown buildings that were lost in the 1970s and 1980s due to the Boise Redevelopment Agency's (now Capital City Development Corporation or CCDC) charge to revitalize downtown Boise. The BRA, as it was formerly known, formed two project areas that included 16 blocks in downtown Boise. Many of the historic buildings which stood on these blocks were scheduled to be razed and replaced by a controversial downtown shopping mall. As a result, the Royal Block was demolished in 1989, as were many other buildings of significant architectural value. In a race against BRA in the 1970s, local entrepreneur Joan Carley successfully bought and preserved many remaining downtown structures in what is now known as Old Boise, but losses nevertheless abounded. And, while Boise High provides a school success story, more recent threats to Boise schools have not resulted in similar triumphs. Between 2002-2010, four National Register schools (three listed and one declared eligible) within the City limits have been demolished, despite efforts by local groups and the City's pleas to save them. As of the writing of this new plan, two of the lots sit vacant, while the site of a third, South Junior High, houses a newly constructed school which is void of most any reference to the original school's Art Deco heritage. The fourth is now the site of a condominium project. Thus, while the City's designated historic districts have preserved much, there is an urgent feeling that there is much left to accomplish.

Many buildings worthy of preservation remain outside the City's jurisdiction. However, the creation of the City's newest local historic districts in the western half of the North End as well as the East

End greatly increased the Commission and staff's workload. The number of requests for Certificates of Appropriateness for structural alterations in those districts continued to increase due to the neighborhoods' ever-growing popularity, and the addition of the newly protected areas doubled the number of structures under the Commission's regulatory umbrella. The Commission's increased regulatory workload made it difficult for the volunteer body and its staff to also engage in the cultural programs outlined by the enabling ordinance. With the City's increasing age and its growing significance to the country's frontier history, the City created the new Arts and History Department in 2008 that took over many of those functions on behalf of the City. The public outreach being done by this arm of the City government will continue to form a critical part of an overall historic preservation strategy aimed at preserving those parts of Boise history that remain unprotected.

The Arts and History Department's mission is to enhance the Boise community by providing leadership, advocacy, education, services, and support for arts and history. It has a full-time staff and a volunteer commission, as well as additional volunteers that serve on the Department's various committees. One of the Department's committees is focused exclusively on history, with the sole purpose of educating and engaging the public about Boise's rich heritage. The existence of this committee and this Department has helped shoulder some of the educational and community-building tasks that were previously the responsibility of the Historic Preservation Commission. With such closely related goals, it is imperative that these two organizations align their missions and work together more formally in the future. With both organizations doing important work toward historic preservation, a formalized partnership with unified goals and objectives would strengthen the overall efforts of historic preservation in Boise. A joint enterprise such as this could work closely to form official relationships with other organizations and agencies unaffiliated with the City, such as Preservation Idaho, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to create a multi-pronged strategy for preservation.

Plan Objectives

Modern Historic Preservation has evolved since its start as a reaction to the urban renewal policies of the mid 20th century. As cities grow and develop, the threats posed to their historic structures change and evolve. In Boise, everyday threats rarely involve high-style architecture such as Boise's former City Hall anymore, although such fights could certainly still occur outside of locally designated districts. A decade into the 21st century, today's threats are most often to vernacular structures and stem from:

- Inappropriate infill development that threatens the congruity of historic neighborhoods;
- Proposed teardowns of individual buildings which lie outside of protected districts;
- Infill and demolition of neighborhoods composed of post-war architecture either unappreciated by the public as yet or just now approaching the 50-year old mark.

In addition to the basic changes in urban growth and development, the building industry is also evolving through constant updates to and changes in construction materials. Staff and Historic Preservation Commission members must remain abreast of the appropriateness of such new

materials in order to guide developers and remodelers. Likewise, technological innovations in energy and water conservation can impact historic structures when owners desire to “go green.”

Historic Preservation policy must be flexible and dynamic enough to deal with all such threats and changes. Because Boise’s stock of historic structures is small compared to older towns and cities in the East, its preservation holds even greater importance. Nevertheless, it is the blend of new and old that provides character to any given place and makes it unique, and thus it is not the goal of Boise’s Historic Preservation program to create a static city.

Yet continued threats to unprotected historic buildings have resulted in demands for a new, updated Historic Preservation Plan that takes into account the overall development goals of the City as well as the inventory of Boise’s structures that are meeting the 50-year mark and therefore are deemed historic. The City hopes that this new plan will bring historic preservation goals in line with Boise’s transportation, growth, and environmental stewardship efforts. As Boise updates its comprehensive plan through the Blueprint Boise planning process, the City’s Historic Preservation Plan needs also to evolve in order to align goals and visions. The City strives to encourage new growth that is congruous with and complementary to existing historic neighborhoods.

With the adoption of this new Historic Preservation Plan, the City hopes to meet the following objectives:

- Identify or make plans to identify existing historic resources that deserve protection but remain unprotected because of their location outside of existing local districts;
- Propose new tools that will allow owners of individually significant structures to obtain protection for said structures;
- Identify policies to preserve modern architecture, the stock of which is just beginning to meet the 50-year historic mark and much of which is currently classified as “non-contributing”;
- Align the City’s sustainability and environmental stewardship goals with its historic preservation goals;
- Work with other City departments, state and private organizations to create a public education and heritage tourism program; and
- Provide alternative tools for City residents and remodelers that will encourage preservation of the existing built environment in lieu of proposals for demolition and replacement.

Themes relating to unified partnership planning, new tools, public education, and a commitment to sustainability are found throughout the plan. These are the themes which tie the plan together and will foster historic preservation that is well integrated with the rest of Boise’s goals and objectives.

Chapter 1: Creating a Unified Vision for Historic Preservation

There are many entities working toward historic preservation goals in Boise. Some are government bodies, others are non-profit groups, and still others are loose coalitions of Boise residents organized at the neighborhood level. Each of these groups is critical to Boise's historic preservation strategy.

Additionally, there are groups and government bodies whose mission is not directly related to historic preservation, but whose actions nonetheless impact Boise's historic resources. For instance, when the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Design Review Commission tackles redevelopment projects in older sections of town, there is frequently a historic component to the proposal or historic resources to be considered. Likewise, when the Parks and Recreation Department undergoes planning efforts, they often deal with historic buildings, historic landscapes, or archaeological resources.

The losses of the past decade indicate that a more cohesive and collaborative program is needed throughout the Valley to execute on educational efforts and achieve the public awareness that will halt more insensitive alterations to Boise's cultural resources. This chapter will outline possible relationships that can be formed and programs that can be executed in a unified way. Two levels of cooperation will be useful in executing historic preservation goals. The first concerns Boise's own commissions, and is aimed at ensuring that they are collectively working toward complementary goals and are in regular communication. The second represents a more comprehensive, city wide effort toward advocacy, and involves agencies and entities outside of City government. Together, this unified vision of historic preservation will help prevent additional cultural losses.

Governmental Collaboration

Multiple government entities and programs exist in the Treasure Valley with missions focused on Historic Preservation. In many cases, federal, state, and local governments work together to implement these agendas.

The federal government has created multiple programs to help preserve community resources across the country. Many of these are administered at the state level, and are aimed at helping municipalities and counties maintain their cultural resources. First, there are tax incentive programs available to assist residents in the preservation of their historic resources. Owners who undertake substantial renovations on an income-producing historic property can claim 20% of the renovation costs as investment tax credits to be used on their federal tax liability. More than 70 buildings in Idaho have been preserved through this program over the last twenty years. Additionally, the federal program has provided limited matching grants to buy and rehabilitate historic properties, a program that Idaho Certified Local Governments (such as Boise) have used in the past to prepare architectural plans, do roof repairs, paint, and stabilize historic properties.⁵

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is jointly administered by individual State Historic Preservation Offices and the National Park Service. Boise, designated as a CLG in 1986, will celebrate 25 years of this status in 2011. Thanks to the designation, the City has obtained a great deal of grant money over the years to create Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, send staff and commissioners to

special training, conduct surveys on historic properties, and engage in educational outreach. It is critical for Boise to maintain this status as one arm of its comprehensive preservation strategy.

In addition to these incentives that are available to individuals and CLGs, Boise also became a designated Preserve America Community in 2006. This federal program, which is administered through the National Park Service, partners with other National Park Service programs and has its own pool of grant money. The designation made the City eligible for these funds, and two years after designation, Boise received a \$20,000 grant to document 30 unprotected local landmarks and focus public attention on these resources. The landmarks, most of which are in Boise's downtown core, have been identified and will form the basis of new walking tours and brochures.

Idaho's State Historic Preservation Office administers many of these national programs. The agency is located in the Old Assay Building, a downtown structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Idaho's SHPO was created in 1971 and functions on a grant from the National Park Service. It is charged with helping municipalities and counties throughout the state fulfill their historic preservation goals, and serves as the liaison between the local governments and the federal government. It also creates strategic plans for historic preservation throughout the state.

At the City level, Boise's Historic Preservation Commission and Department of Arts and History are the two entities most directly involved in historic preservation activities. However, there are others whose activities have an impact on cultural resources. The Planning and Zoning Commission and the Design Review Commission often deal with projects that feature a historic building or must demonstrate congruity with historic neighborhoods. In addition to these, the City also created a Neighborhood Association program in the 1994 which has been very successful at including citizens in the preservation of their respective neighborhoods. Boise's North and East Ends and the Central Bench area each have active neighborhood associations that have enthusiastically participated in creating neighborhood plans which address preservation issues. They have also partnered with the City for educational efforts and even contributed money to various programs conducted with the City. The City should continue partnering with these neighborhood associations and others in an effort to involve additional citizens and create a comprehensive, integrated preservation effort.

Finally, Ada County, in which Boise sits, also has a volunteer Historic Preservation Council. This group of volunteers does not have any regulatory oversight duties, but instead focuses exclusively on education and advocacy. Their goal is to preserve Ada County's heritage. They have conducted numerous surveys on various historic resources that lie outside of Boise but within the County over the past two decades. Their surveys have included historic resources in Star, pre-1920 homes in Ada County, and, together with the Boise City Historic Preservation Commission, a windshield survey of historic resources in the Boise Area of Impact. This final document – which was funded through a CLG grant – demonstrates that cross-jurisdictional cooperation has been successfully accomplished in the past.

As Boise approaches the challenges of growth in the next decade, continued cooperation with federal and state organizations is critical to maintaining a robust program of historic preservation. The City

must also make sure that all of Boise's departments and commissions are acting in concert with regard to historic preservation goals and objectives. Additionally, cooperation with the county entity would be an excellent approach. Together, Boise's Historic Preservation Commission and Boise's Arts and History Department can align objectives with the County Council to ensure that they both are focused on the most threatened resources of the Valley.

Goal 1.1. Pursue funding for historic preservation activities available through various federal programs.

Policy 1.1a: Maintain Certified Local Government and Preserve America Status.

Action I Remain up to date on requirements to keep Boise's status current.

Action II Apply for grants to pursue the goals listed in later sections of this plan.

Goal 1.2. Ensure historic preservation goals are being applied consistently across City Commissions and Departments.

Policy 1.2a: Increase understanding of historic preservation goals in non-historic related departments and commissions.

Action I Appoint liaison from Historic Preservation Commission to Planning and Zoning Commission.

This liaison would be an attendee of Planning and Zoning Commission work sessions at regular intervals, to be determined by Historic Preservation Commission. This Historic Preservation Commission member would serve to convey historic preservation strategies to the Planning Commission in order to align goals.

Action II Change application routing.

There are many historic buildings located outside of locally designated districts. Therefore, to increase understanding of historic preservation goals, change workflow routing so that City applications for buildings more than 50 years of age are also routed to Historic Preservation staff for input.

Policy 1.2b: Ensure consistency between the City's Historic Preservation Plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Action I Allow Historic Preservation Commission the opportunity to comment on changes to the Comprehensive Plan when related to historic neighborhoods.

When changes are proposed to the City's Comprehensive Plan, provide the Historic Preservation Commission the opportunity to comment. There are often changes made to various parts of the Comprehensive Plan that impact historic preservation goals, particularly when they relate to neighborhoods with historic resources. These include (but are not limited to) foothills neighborhoods, the North and East End neighborhoods, and the Central Bench.

Policy 1.2c: Regularly check consistency of historic preservation strategy with other City goals and strategies to ensure compatibility.

Action I Create a City Coordination Committee that will collaborate to ensure historic preservation goals are being implemented consistently throughout the City.

A City Coordination Committee will consist of staff members from various departments and agencies whose functions impact historic preservation goals. These include Arts and History, Historic Preservation, Planning and Zoning, Neighborhoods, Design Review, Capital City Development Corporation, and Parks and Recreation. The Committee will meet at least quarterly to create awareness of each department or agency's activities, and to identify areas where coordination would be beneficial or where activities are at cross-purposes.

Action II Appoint a liaison from Historic Preservation Commission to sit on History Committee of the Arts and History Department and attend all meetings.

Change bylaws of Historic Preservation Commission to include a permanent liaison from the Commission to attend the Arts and History Department's History Committee meetings. This liaison should report regularly back to the Commission during monthly work sessions.

Action III Coordinate with Transportation Planning.

Assign a historic preservation planner to work with the City's transportation planner to ensure all historic resources are maintained and protected.

Goal 1.3. Engage in county-wide efforts for historic preservation.

Policy 1.3a: Work with Ada County staff and/or Commission members to coordinate historic preservation efforts.

Action I Assign staff member to serve as a liaison with the Ada County Historic Preservation Council. Meet semi-annually at set intervals to determine potential joint projects and become aware of each entity's efforts.

Other Organizations

In addition to governmental entities and programs, there are many other groups – citizen-initiated and government-sponsored – advocating for historic concerns in Boise. The City should remain abreast of their efforts, encouraging activities that help implement historic preservation goals in Boise and working with these groups when possible.

The Idaho State Historical Society is a state agency devoted to preserving and promoting Idaho's heritage. The State of Idaho created the agency soon after statehood, in 1907. The Society works closely with the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure that Idaho's inventory of records is maintained. It has a full-time staff of 49 that is spread around its various branches, including the State Historical Museum, the State Archives, the Idaho History Center, and others.

There are also two important non-governmental organizations and an educational institution in Boise with whom the City should be collaborating. The first is the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has a Boise program officer working on behalf of Idaho resources. Although once a federal government group, the National Trust now operates entirely as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The program officer's goals are to help the various entities in Idaho leverage the resources of the National Trust. (See Historic Preservation in Boise, The National Movement on page 16.) The resources of this organization are vast, and Boise should continue leveraging all it has to offer, including grant money and training opportunities. Preservation Idaho is another 501(c)3 located in Boise. Idaho residents founded the organization in 1972, and it retains the support of hundreds of Idaho residents today. Among other goals, Preservation Idaho aims to preserve Boise's architectural history. It has an active board and membership that could be leveraged for projects and educational outreach.

Finally, the City's relationship with Boise State University has resulted in some outstanding educational programs which the City should maintain. Through the Idaho State Board of Education, BSU formed a Center for Idaho History and Politics in 2004. The Center has worked collaboratively with the City to increase awareness of Boise and Idaho history. The Center worked with the City to create the new Arts and History Department, and together they continue to put on a monthly program called Fettuccine Forum. The Forum brings experts on various historic subjects to a civic forum monthly in conjunction with Boise's First Thursday community event throughout the winter months. Boise should maintain this working relationship with the University.

Goal 1.4. Lead efforts to create a city-wide consortium of Historic Preservation advocates.

Policy 1.1b: Create formal relationship between Historic Preservation Commission and Community and Educational Organizations.

- Action I Create a Boise History Consortium, composed of representatives from each organization noted above, including: Idaho State Historical Society, National Trust for Historic Preservation, neighborhood groups, the City of Boise, Preservation Idaho, Boise State, and the State Historic Preservation Office.

- Action II Identify a staff member or a commissioner from either the Arts and History Department or the Historic Preservation Commission to serve as a formal liaison for regular contact with the consortium via email or a newly established web site. Liaison should report regularly to full commission during work session time. This could be a special appointee called the “Community Ambassador” who would not serve any formal role on the Commission but which would report to the two Commissions (Historic Preservation and Arts and History) on Non Government Organizations’ goals and projects.

- Action III Host an annual strategy meeting with members from all groups to discuss initiatives, activities, and progress.

- Action IV Create structure for regular communication with these groups, potentially through a group email list by which City staff sends a brief bi-monthly update of City activities.

Goal 1.5. Include educational outreach and public awareness of cultural resources in all planning functions.

Policy 1.5a: Plan and execute educational outreach and advocacy through the Boise History Consortium.

- Action I Include education component into annual budget requests for Arts and History and Historic Preservation.

Chapter 2: Boise's Historic Character

The City of Boise represents America's frontier history and life in the Intermountain West. Because the City was founded in the middle of the 19th century, Boise's architectural inventory, while small, represents virtually all major national architectural movements since the latter half of that century, including Victorian/Queen Anne, Italianate, Romanesque, Colonial Revival, Craftsman Bungalow, Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Art Moderne, International Style, and even a Googie structure. Many of the best structures representing these styles have long disappeared from the architectural landscape, such as the old Idaho Soldier's Home, a Moorish-inspired building, and the former Boise City Hall, a Romanesque structure. But there are still a number of representative buildings that remain.

Unlike some western cities where there are large areas that represent a single architectural style, Boise's comparatively modest growth resulted in various neighborhoods throughout the City that include structures from multiple eras and architectural styles. Many of the homes in the East and North End neighborhoods have large numbers of Craftsman Bungalows, but even there, they are interspersed with Queen Anne Victorians, Minimal Traditionals, Colonial Revivals, and even Ranch style homes in the more geographically distant areas that developed the latest.

In addition to already protected areas, there are multiple neighborhoods in Boise still in need of study or survey which may in fact qualify to become theme-based historic districts based on their quantity or uniformity of a single style. Any such potential districts are likely to be made up of postwar structures that have only recently begun to reach the 50-year threshold as well as public appreciation.

Architecture in Boise

After the City's founding in 1863 and its subsequent evolution into more than just a fort and frontier town, prominent town residents began building ornate structures to house their families. Many of these structures from the first decade of the 20th century were designed by the firm of Tourtellotte & Hummel, which was founded in 1903. John E. Tourtellotte had moved to Boise in 1890, the year Idaho was admitted to the Union, and Charles F. Hummel arrived just five years later. Tourtellotte was well known as a promoter and savvy designer, while Hummel was a classically trained civil engineer and architect. Soon after forming their firm in 1903, the two designed and built many of Boise's most well-known architectural gems.

Tourtellotte & Hummel's earliest structures were located close to the center of town. Some Victorian-era homes, such as C.W. Moore's first home (later known as the DeLamar house), were located on Grove Street, what one historian has called the City's "first fashionable residential area."⁶ Others, belonging to people such as entrepreneur Hosea Eastman and C.W. Moore's subsequent home, were located on Warm Springs Avenue, and still others were scattered on random lots in the still predominantly rural North and East Ends. The homes were defined by highly ornate woodwork, wraparound porches, detailed shingles, and other typical Queen Anne finishes. The North and East End neighborhoods contain a wide selection of Queen Anne homes based both on the style's characteristic shapes – hipped roofs with lower cross gables, cross-gabled roofs, or front-gabled roofs – as well as its distinctive detailing – spindlework or free classic details such as dentils. Boise's original City Hall had

many of these features, as well. There are other parts of town – as yet unprotected by a historic district overlay – that also contain some of this firm’s designs. (See Image 7, 16th Street Queen Anne, Courtesy of Boise Architecture Project, Image 8, Boise City Hall, Courtesy of Boise Architecture Project.)

The City expanded north and east of the downtown area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, thanks in part to the arrival of the street car in Boise in the 1890s. Some streets continued to develop with ornate Queen Anne structures, particularly along the North End’s Harrison Boulevard and the East End’s Warm Springs Avenue. Harrison Boulevard was platted in 1891 as a 100-foot boulevard by developer W.E. Pierce, and was later improved with a center median in 1916, creating a tree-lined, grand boulevard in the tradition of the City Beautiful movement.⁷ Although Harrison Boulevard’s structures were not themselves uniformly mansions, the flanking streets on either side of the Boulevard developed with more consistently modest architecture, as did the areas developed on the north side of Warm Springs Avenue. As more average families moved away from the commercial hub of town thanks to the access afforded by the streetcar lines, these areas saw a change in the architecture and size of homes. (See Image 9, Harrison Boulevard Queen Anne, Courtesy of Boise Architecture Project)

Small Craftsman bungalows became popular architectural choices during this era. Craftsman bungalows often represent influences from the English Arts and Crafts movement and oriental wooden architecture.⁸ They commonly have gabled roofs, exposed wood rafters, and intricate woodwork. Many of them – reflecting the various iterations of the style – still stand proudly today throughout the North and East Ends, with the protection of local historic district overlays. These historic neighborhoods also boast variations of Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Spanish style homes. (See Image 10, 24th Street Bungalow, Image 11, 18th Street Mission Revival)

Various developers platted these streetcar suburbs out as the town’s population increased in the late 19th century. They created relatively small lots, approximately 120 feet deep and 25 feet wide. Most people selected two or three of these lots upon which to build their homes, creating frontages 50 or 75 feet wide.⁹ Some lots close to Front Street and others near the far northwest corner of the North End are irregularly shaped, but the pattern persists throughout most of these neighborhoods.

Architecturally, many things changed with the Depression and the coming of World War II. During the 1930s, supplies became harder and harder to come by while people had fewer resources to spend on building homes. Builders began to construct much simpler structures that reflected the times. Gone was the woodwork of the Craftsman tradition, and in its place came modest shingled structures with fewer windows, porches, and decorative details. These Minimal Traditional homes often mimicked the shapes and styles of earlier eras, but with significantly less of the traditional detailing.

As in the rest of the country, the postwar era brought some of the most significant changes to Boise both in terms of architectural style, building materials, and the way people lived. By the late 1940s, the automobile had become a fixture of American life, and its ubiquitous ownership made it possible to live even further from the city center. Additionally, the arrival of bulldozer technology made living in ecologically delicate environments like the foothills more feasible. Thus, the 1950s and 1960s saw

greater numbers of people moving even further away from Boise’s urban core onto the Boise Bench and the Boise Foothills, driving cars, and building homes that reflected new postwar lifestyles.

The Ranch style home dominated 1950s construction. Low-slung rooflines, single stories, and garage doors that fronted the street characterized typical Ranch style homes. Ranch home interiors also reflected domestic trends of the decade: a turn back toward the nuclear family that meant a focus on the kitchen and hearth. Additionally, builders experimented with new, synthetic materials on many Ranch style homes, resulting in style that was less consistent across the board. Many parts of Boise evolved with a large number of Ranch style homes. Numerous blocks on the Boise Bench continue to display high percentages of these homes, as do many early foothills subdivisions, including the Highlands, Boise Heights, and parts of lower Foothills East, all of which lie in northeast Boise. (See Image 12, 24th Street Ranch, Image 13, Randolph Robertson Clinker, Courtesy of Boise Architecture Project)

As Boise grew into these “suburban” neighborhoods, they deserted the urban core in even greater numbers. By the 1970s, older homes in the North and East Ends were run-down and poorly maintained. Prices began to fall as the allure of bigger lots and bigger homes rendered these streetcar suburbs less popular. Simultaneously, commercial businesses increasingly moved to “suburban” malls, a trend that was equally devastating to Boise’s urban core. Together, these changes in the way Boiseans lived greatly altered the neighborhoods that had once formed the core of the city. And to address the problem, local, state, and federal governments stepped in with laws that were designed to turn the problem of decaying cities around across the country.

Historic Preservation in Boise

The National Movement

Historic Preservation came to Boise long after the nationwide movement to preserve historic sites began. The larger movement’s genesis came near the turn of the 20th century, when the 1906 Antiquities Act became the first federal policy to embrace the preservation of historic sites by granting presidents the authority to designate national monuments on public lands. Soon after, Congress created the National Park Service in 1916 to administer these designated sites (as well as others). The agency was given greater powers with Congressional passage of the 1935 Historic Sites Act which enabled the Service to acquire property, build museums, create signage, and conduct programs of educational value. Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal also included another law designed to put people back to work: the 1933 Historic American Buildings Survey (HAER).¹⁰ These various federal policies caused greater public appreciation of America’s past and strengthened policy alternatives to industrial progress and unrestrained growth. They also encouraged a partnership between the federal, state, local governments and the private sector that continues to this day.

The cooperation between these entities was embodied in the 1947 birth of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which began as a private, non-profit organization built around the fear that America’s future would be “without roots, without a sense of identity, with nothing to lose.”¹¹ Congress chartered the organization two years later, and the National Trust received federal funds as part of its

operating budget for more than 30 years. In 1995, however, the Trust decided to cease reliance on these funds and revert to a privately funded group.¹² Throughout these changes, the organization has provided and continues to provide guidance to local and state preservation groups across the country and is widely considered the experts on historic preservation issues. The organization's goal today is to "help people protect, enhance, and enjoy the places that matter to them."¹³

The National Historic Preservation Act, initiated by the National Trust's director and passed by Congress in 1966, was a direct response to decaying urban centers across the nation and the loss of thousands of locally important structures to urban renewal programs. Prior to the passage of the 1966 law, the National Register had included only buildings and sites of national importance or those which were part of the National Park system. The new law recognized that the criteria for Register placement were too strict and often left out structures or places that were highly significant, particularly to newer communities in the West. But the law allowed new criteria to be adopted that would allow the inclusion of buildings and sites with local or state significance. The law also enabled the creation of State Historic Preservation offices in each state, whose officer would act as the nominator for properties in each State to be included on the National Register. Finally, the law created a grant program for preservation through the Department of Interior, in which grants are allocated to individual states, dependent on annual budgets authorized by Congress.¹⁴ Idaho's Legislature in fact created the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in 1966 following the passage of this federal law.¹⁵

As noted in Chapter 1, the Certified Local Governments Program has been particularly successful at creating partnerships between federal, state, local governments, coordinating local communities with the federal Historic Preservation Program. The State Historic Preservation Office receives funds to distribute to certified communities throughout the state of Idaho, including Boise, which has been certified since 1986.

Historic Preservation and the State of Idaho

In addition to the federal laws that set the stage for preservation work, the State of Idaho has passed its own laws that concern historic preservation issues specific to Idaho. The Idaho Legislature passed the Historic Preservation Law in 1975, enabling municipalities around the state to create historic districts and individual historic properties, as well as to acquire ownership or easements for conservation purposes. (Title 67, Chapter 46 – Preservation of Historic Sites.) The same title in the Idaho Code also includes protection for historic sites in Chapter 41. This chapter declares state policy to be the encouragement of Idaho's cultural and historic resources.

In addition to these important chapters, the Idaho Legislature has also codified protection of the state's archaeological and grave sites. Title 18, Chapter 70-35 of the state code makes it a misdemeanor to "mar or harm any archaeological artifacts found within a cave or cavern," and Title 27, Chapter 5, prohibits the destruction of any grave site. Finally, state law (codified in Title 31, Chapter 8) enables counties to raise money for the support of historical societies and other historical activities through the levy of a property tax, limited to .012% on each dollar of market value.

Boise's Historic Preservation Commission: Work and Accomplishments

Since the Boise Commission's founding in 1976, it has created and maintained a remarkable program of historic preservation, created through regular revision of the Boise City Historic Preservation Ordinance, chapter 2-18 of the Boise City Code. Between 1980 and 2006, the Commission designated nine local historic districts, composed of three commercial and six residential districts. To contend with changes that might be made to structures within these districts, City staff and the Commission passed an ordinance in the late 1980s that created a Certificate of Appropriateness program, requiring structure owners in a historic district to get City permission prior to alterations on the exterior of their buildings. The ordinance and process have undergone changes and refinement since they were first created, as the City government has gauged what was acceptable to the public in terms of regulation.

The process by which an owner is required to obtain permission is a fairly simple one. Basic changes, such as paint color, are not regulated. However, the Commission reviews any structural changes, demolitions, or additions unless minor. A decision matrix is available through the Boise City website explaining which changes can be approved at the staff level and which require Commission review.

In an effort to ease the process further, the City has commissioned a set of residential and commercial guidelines for Boise's districts, both of which have been updated recently. The guidelines provide assistance to building owners with regard to materials, lot coverage, landscaping, and architectural style. As part of the well-laid out and newly streamlined process, applicants are now required to meet with City staff prior to submitting an application.

With regard to specific structural changes, the Commission is guided by the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, as well as the locally adopted guidelines and two books on historic architecture, *A Field Guide to American Houses*,¹⁶ and *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*.¹⁷

Historic Districts

The Historic Preservation Commission's greatest accomplishments are undoubtedly its historic districts. Through the creation of the City's nine locally designated historic districts, the City has inventoried the vast number and variety of structures in historic neighborhoods throughout Boise, making a great contribution to the preservation of the City's frontier and architectural heritage. Through the process of creating these districts, a great deal of history was collected and recorded, so that there is a rich repository of information about the City's earliest areas. Commercial districts were created first, followed by a number of residential districts. The first residential district, proposed for an area called the Near East End in 1985, actually failed, requiring subsequent proposals to meet strict guidelines and garner a great deal of public support.¹⁸ Additionally, the historic district ordinance was refined to permit the Historic Preservation Commission to regulate only exterior changes through the granting of Certificates of Appropriateness. The Commission has no authority over interior alterations.

What follows is a brief introduction to each district, in the order that they were created, with references for the reader to existing documents that provide more detailed descriptions.

Hyde Park

Boise designated the commercial Hyde Park area as a local Historic District in 1980, immediately following the adoption of the City's Historic Preservation Plan. The same area was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The district covers a two block area along both sides of 13th Street in Boise's North End, between Alturas and Brumback Streets.

Hyde Park was Boise's first suburban shopping district. 13th Street was built in the 1890s as a road to connect the City to Hill Road at the base of the foothills. Hyde Park developed on the four plats added to the City between 1891-1893: Hyde Park, Brumback, Byron, and Lemp.¹⁹ Residents accessed it on the streetcar line financed by Walter E. Pierce, who was the exclusive real estate agent for the Hyde Park Addition.²⁰ There, visitors were able to find barbers, a dairy, a meat market, a post office, and a pharmacy. Even an Odd Fellows Meeting Hall was built there in 1903, a building whose façade easement the City now holds.²¹

Old Boise

Old Boise was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The City of Boise designated it as a local Historic District two years later in 1980. The local District stretches east to west between Capitol Boulevard and 5th Street, and north to south between Idaho and Grove Streets.

Old Boise lies within Boise's original town site, where miners, military men, and settlers came to conduct business. Although many of the original buildings that stood on these blocks are now gone, the replacements were built between 1890-1920. Consequently, those buildings have gained their own historical significance. There are a number of architectural styles represented within this district, among them Romanesque Revival, but most of the buildings have a fairly uniform size and scale. The district was originally surveyed in 1979. Despite the Historic District designation, many of the buildings changed significantly over the next 30 years. Thus, the City had the area re-surveyed in 2007. Despite the overwhelming amount of surface parking within the District today, the area contains the largest number of architecturally important commercial structures of historic importance in the larger downtown area. Upon re-survey, 25 of the remaining 43 structures retained their contributing status.

South Eighth Street

Like the Old Boise District, the South Eighth Street District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and the City designated it a local district in 1982. This area of Boise, which lies along 8th and 9th Streets between Broad and Fulton, developed as a warehouse district in the late 19th century.

As Boise's commercial significance grew, this area developed along the railroad spurs extending south from Front Street, allowing goods to be transported both into and out of the City. The district contained light industrial and large warehousing uses. The area thrived until trucking took over as the preferred transportation option for goods in the 1950s, at which time the commercial neighborhood faltered, since few of the buildings contained enough space to accommodate trucks.²²

The area underwent a renaissance of sorts in the late 1970s, as commercial developers re-imagined the neighborhood into a retail district. At the time, many of the buildings were altered in such a way that the design integrity was lost, although the dominance of brick still held the district together. In part to maintain the integrity of the rest of the area, the City created the local District. Even with the local designation, however, the buildings in the area have continued to change rather dramatically. Loading docks have been enclosed or removed in many cases, and multiple businesses exist within a single structure.

Today in 2010, the BODO – or **Boise Downtown** – development has reconfigured the street layout and added new buildings that are larger in scale than the historic warehouse structures, which themselves were large for their time. The new buildings dwarf some of the old and architecturally significant buildings in the area. Additionally, residential units have even been created where a warehouse previously stood at 8th and Myrtle Streets. With the commercial neighborhood continuing to evolve and the feeling and architecture being diluted, the City re-surveyed the area in 2007, with a view toward the possibility of extending the district to the south and including three additional historic warehouses. Although those structures were found to be contributing, the City ultimately declined to add them to the district.

Harrison Boulevard

Harrison Boulevard was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The City followed up with a local Historic District designation in 1989. The Boulevard runs north to south through the middle of Boise's North End and connects the City to northern foothills neighborhoods which were developed in the post World War II era.

President Benjamin Harrison – after whom the Boulevard is named – visited Boise in 1891, a year after he signed the Act which admitted Idaho to the Union. Beloved by Idahoans for this act, they welcomed him with great fanfare that spring, and many wanted to honor him. A month after his visit, landowners north of Fort Street began to work with City Council to create a street with his name, and in May 1891, the Brumback Addition's 17th Street was re-named Harrison Boulevard.²³

It was around this same time that Grove Street declined in fashionability, as downtown's commercial uses encroached upon this formerly residential and rural area. Grove Street residents such as C.W. Moore and Hosea Eastman began moving to Warm Springs Avenue on the City's eastern flank, while others began to build on the newly named Harrison Boulevard after the turn of the century.²⁴

In 1916, in response to property owner requests, the City paved the first eight blocks of Harrison Boulevard and installed a median down the center of the road, creating a beautified boulevard in the manner of the time.²⁵ By then, the lots had begun to fill in with homes representing many different architectural styles. The first home on the Boulevard was a 1901 Queen Anne, and today you can see Bungalows, Tudors, Colonials, and Art Modernes. The State Historic Preservation Office's 1979 survey of the Boulevard's homes found 427 of them to be older than 50 years.²⁶ Additionally, many of the homes are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Homes.

Warm Springs

The National Register of Historic Places added the Warm Springs neighborhood to its list in 1979. The City provided local protection by making it a Historic District in 1996.

The Warm Springs District is well-known for its collection of geothermally-heated, stately homes along a wide, tree-lined street. Residents began moving to what was formerly known as Hot Springs Road in the 1890s, following the discovery of hot water by a number of Boise's leading families. The new street car also extended a line from downtown up Warm Springs Avenue. C.W. Moore, a banker and the president of Boise Artesian Hot & Cold Water Company, Inc., built a home at 1109 Warm Springs Avenue in 1892 that still stands today. Other structures, built by Tourtellotte and Hummel, also grace this beautiful boulevard. Many were constructed in the following years, as citizens took advantage of the street car and the geothermal heat. In 1892, the Geothermal Water Company built the Natatorium, a hot water resort that drew even more people to the east end of town. Homes along the Avenue include many Queen Anne Victorians, Colonial Revivals, Tudor Revivals, Mission Revivals, and Bungalows.

North End

The City of Boise created the North End Historic District in two phases. The City first provided protection to the area lying east of Harrison Boulevard and north of Fort Street in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Then, in 2002, the North End Neighborhood Association requested that the Commission pursue an expanded North End Historic District. Thus, the area lying west of Harrison Boulevard to 28th Street was added to the North End District in 2004. Although many individual homes have been placed on the National Register of Historic Homes, the neighborhood as a whole does not have a federal designation. It now exists locally as a united residential historic district.

The North End's first subdivision was platted north of Fort Street in 1878 by Dwight Arnold. His addition was slow to be built, and Arnold himself did not build a home there until 1891, when a great many Boise residents began to eye the area north of downtown for homes.²⁷ Developers such as Walter E. Pierce and John M. Haines platted many other additions in Boise's North End starting in the 1890s, as streetcar lines made living so far outside the City's core feasible. Queen Anne homes dominated early building trends in the 1890s, and there are numerous examples of these throughout the North End, many of them lying in the eastern portion of the District. While many of these early homes were being designed by architects and built for the City's prominent residents, vernacular homes were being built as well, usually with clapboard siding and little ornamentation and housing less well-off residents.²⁸ Colonial revival and bungalows replaced the Queen Anne style as Boise marched into the 20th century. The District's westernmost areas contain homes representing more modern styles, as well, including Minimal Traditional and Tudor Revivals.

East End

The City of Boise created the East End Historic District in 2004. Redevelopment pressure in the late 1990s and early 2000s prompted neighborhood residents to petition for the district's creation. Although many of its individual homes are on the National Register, the district as a whole is not.

The East End neighborhood developed geographically along the north side of Warm Springs Avenue in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The first East End subdivision was platted in 1890 on the north side of Warm Springs Avenue between Bruce and Locust Streets,²⁹ with four more additions added before 1905. Together, they extended as far east as Coston Street and as far north as McKinley. The streetcar extensions made the possibility of moving out of the City and into the suburbs a reality for many families. Thus, there were many residents who moved to the area who belonged more to the middle and working classes than those on Warm Springs Avenue. Their homes, of course, reflected their status. Unlike the mansions on Warm Springs, residents on surrounding streets built numerous bungalows, typified by one or one-and-a-half story structures with wide, shallow-pitched roofs and overhanging eaves. Most of these homes also boasted wide front porches.³⁰ While bungalows dominate the neighborhood, other styles can be found as well, including Mission Revival, Queen Anne, and American foursquare. Because leapfrog development left many lots vacant over the years, more recent styles such as Minimal Traditional, Tudor, and Colonial Revival are scattered among the bungalows from the area's second building boom in the 1930s, when Federal laws provided new financing options for the purchase of owner-occupied homes.³¹

Hays Street Historic District

The Hayes Street Historic District, also frequently called the Near North End, was designated as a Conservation District in 2001. The area comprises 22 blocks of the original Boise town site between downtown Boise and the residential North End. It serves as a buffer between the intensive commercial uses of the downtown area and the residential zoning of the North End.

When the area came under threat during the late 1990s, the City opted to create a conservation district there. It was called the Near North End Conservation District, and encompassed the area from the north side of W. Franklin Street, north to the south side of Fort Street, and from the east side of 17th Street to the west side of 4th Street. The Conservation District's objective was to protect the architectural and historical character of the neighborhood using adaptive reuse methods. The intent was to encourage continued residential uses, encourage redevelopment and/or renovation of established historic institutional uses, and minimize demolition of structures for parking lots or new office developments, maintaining the Near North End as a transitional area between the predominant single-family residential neighborhoods of the north end and the commercial intensity of downtown. However, the conservation district was ineffective at preventing demolitions of historic buildings. Many were razed to make way for parking lots, while many others were converted to commercial space.

Controversy over property conversion and demolition in the early 2000s provoked residents to ask for a local historic district overlay. At the time, more than 50% of the remaining structures in the district had been constructed prior to 1912, and the neighborhood – called the Fort Street Historic District – had been placed on the National Register in 1982. Following controversial hearings, the area was in fact made a local historic district in 2004. ([See Image 14, Hays Street District](#))

Spaulding Ranch

Spaulding Ranch represents Boise's long agricultural history. Now surrounded by urban uses and housing developments, the property that lies on Cole Road between Ustick Road and Mountain View Drive harkens Boise back to its irrigation dependent roots. The district, which contains only this one property, was nominated to the National Register in 1994 and became a locally protected district in 1995. The property contains a farm house, a chicken coop, an outhouse built by the WPA, and a granary. The property represents Boise's settlement and irrigation history. Although the property owner attempted to have the district designation removed in 2006, the City denied the request, and the Spaulding Ranch remains protected by a historic district overlay.

Conclusion

By creating the Historic District as a tool for historic preservation, the City provided protection for many different types of historic resources. Many of the 2500 homes and commercial structures built in these districts represent work by prominent local architects Tourtellotte & Hummell, as well as vernacular buildings that represent more common styles. The districts also afford protection to the City's streetcar suburbs, which form an important part of Boise's history and demonstrate how the City fit in with national trends, and even protect a historically important piece of Boise's agricultural history. Finally, the districts protect many structures that represent the varied architectural styles found across Boise.

Residential and Commercial Guidelines

To assist with administering the City's Historic Districts, the Historic Commission realized that the public needed a set of expectations. To maintain good will among the districts' residents, the City wanted to provide guidance to them regarding appropriate and inappropriate alterations to historic structures. The City also wanted to ensure that the districts remained dynamic, and that the neighborhoods did not become frozen in time.

Residential Guidelines

The Residential Design Guidelines, first adopted in 1994 and revised most recently in 2006, help to prevent overlooking the value of the City's historic inventory. They encourage quality development in Boise's older neighborhoods through alterations and new construction which are harmonious with the character of the existing neighborhood.

The purpose of the design guidelines for residential historic districts in Boise is to provide guidance and design parameters to property owners, architects, builders, developers, designers, City staff, and the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council. The guidelines provide design policies for each specific neighborhood and give direction on preserving the integrity of the community's historic resources through congruous new construction and alteration. The guidelines also specify an approach to design that will help sustain the character of each district so that it remains appealing to residents who already live there. Property owners are encouraged from these guidelines to make design decisions which promote an environment that is scaled to the pedestrian, maintains cohesive neighborhood identity, and respects the unique natural setting of old Boise neighborhoods. When the guidelines are followed carefully, they provide uniform review and increased predictability, while serving

as a means to prevent delays and minimize added costs to developers and builders. The guidelines work best when used as the benchmark during early stages of project conception and design.

There are a few general overriding goals for new construction within Boise residential historic districts. New construction should be contemporary, but congruous with existing buildings in their setting and within the historic district as a whole. New additions to existing buildings should not overwhelm the original structure nor cover too great a percentage of the lot. The immediate block face is viewed as the starting point for the site design of new buildings as well as additions, and building site design is directed at reinforcing the established character of the historic district and the visual continuity of the streetscape.

These guidelines help determine the congruity of proposed exterior changes in residential historic districts. They are updated as needed and when new technologies and techniques arise.

Commercial Guidelines

The City recognized that commercial structures were quite different from residential both in terms of scale, architecture and materials, and therefore created a separate set of guidelines for its commercial districts. Buildings in the three districts – Old Boise, Hyde Park, and South 8th Street – offer distinctive wood, brick, stone and concrete materials and contribute immeasurably to Boise’s identity, history, unique sense of place, and the quality of life in the neighborhoods around them. Boise’s commercial historic districts create walkable streets supporting urban living and counteracting sprawl. The commercial design guidelines are used to preserve the districts’ important historic qualities while allowing changes and new construction that accommodate 21st century lifestyles.

The guidelines allow for sustaining or increasing a major source of value for property owners, businesses, and residents, and encourage creative solutions to enhance the special character of the districts, reinforce property values, and spur economic development. The guidelines provide a basis for making informed, consistent decisions about proposed new construction and building or site alterations. When the guidelines are used in conjunction with City Staff consultation, they benchmark early stages of design and project conception, as well as minimize added costs and prevent delays to builders and developers.

Like the residential guidelines, the commercial ones are also geared toward creating an environment that is scaled to the pedestrian while respecting each district’s unique setting. The goal of the guidelines is to maintain cohesive neighborhood identity and to provide a decision-making framework for the Historic Preservation Commission. Finally, they identify additional resources to accomplish appropriate rehabilitation, additions and new construction within the districts

Façade Easements

The City of Boise uses many different tools to preserve historic structures located in and out of the designated historic districts. Façade easements are one way of preserving a building, and Boise holds eight such easements. The program enables a tax-exempt, public agency or a charitable organization to protect land or buildings from potential development or changes by acquiring partial interests in such

properties. The purpose of the program is to provide an alternative to purchasing a building in order to preserve it. The cost of an easement program is considerably lower than buying the property to protect its valuable resources because easements can be acquired by donations, making it a win for the building owner, as well.

The City of Boise uses its easement program to help protect architecturally and historically significant buildings, and has façade easements on the following buildings:

- **The Odd Fellows Building:** Located at 1603 N. 13th Street in the Hyde Park Historic District, this two-story stone and brick building was constructed in 1902 and housed shops on the ground floor and meeting rooms above. The structure has undergone extensive restoration to return it to its original appearance and façade. It was donated by Kurt Donner, Thomas Chalberg, and J. Robert Skovgaard.
- **The Idanha Building:** Built in 1900, the Idanha is located at 928 W. Main Street. The building was the grandest hotel in the state and echoed the chateau style hotels in Quebec. It was Boise's first six-story building, marking the start of the "skyscraper" era for the city. This building façade was donated by Ken Howell.
- **The Eichelberger Apartments:** These apartments were built on North 9th Street in 1910. Their significance lies in their representation of an unusual example of the classical revival taste of numerous contemporary buildings rendered at mid-scale in a multi-unit dwelling. The apartment building is also the first to be composed entirely of single-story flats.
- **Union Block:** Constructed in 1900, the Union Block is located on Idaho Street between Capital Boulevard and 8th Street. The building is constructed of massive sandstone and has Romanesque characteristics including arches in its façade. This facade was donated by Ken Howell. ([See Image 15, Union Block Building, Courtesy of Boise Architecture Project.](#))
- **Alaska Center Building:** Located at 1016 Main Street, the Alaska building was built in 1906 and originally had two stories and a basement. Two additional stories were added in 1911. The brick on the building is laid in imitation of Renaissance stone rustication. In 1953, the interior and the ground floor storefront were completely remodeled.
- **Carnegie Library:** The Carnegie Library, located at 815 W. Washington Street, was built in 1905 using only local labor and sandstone that was locally quarried. Carnegie Libraries were repositories built with money donated by Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish-American businessman and philanthropist. This façade was donated by Fredric V. Shoemaker. ([See Image 16, Carnegie Library, Courtesy of Boise Architecture Project.](#))
- **Quarles House:** Located at 1211 W. Washington, was built by Idaho State Supreme Court Justice Ralph Perry Quarles. This building was constructed in the Renaissance Revival style and still maintains great integrity. Mr. & Mrs. Herbold gave the façade easement to the Independent School District of Boise who transferred it to the City of Boise in August 2007.

Conservation Districts

Conservation Districts are another tool that the City of Boise has implemented to preserve certain neighborhood's characteristics. Such neighborhoods are identifiable by certain attributes that embody architecture, urban design, geography or history. The tool can be used to protect neighborhoods from changes that would otherwise be allowed by the underlying zoning. A conservation district serves as an overlay zone which augments the standards of the base zone for new construction, additions to existing buildings, and structures or lands. Typically the tool is utilized when a neighborhood has historical and/or architectural merit but does not qualify as a historic district or does not have enough support for historic preservation controls. Nevertheless, these areas are still eligible for protection and that is when a conservation district is favored over historic designation.

Neighborhoods or areas should meet one of the following criteria to be selected for consideration for a Conservation District:

1. The neighborhood or area needs to have a distinctive character with identifiable attributes embodied in architecture, use, urban design or history that make it a unique and integral part of the city's identity.
2. The neighborhood or area has an identity and a definable physical character that may have a high artistic value or may have a relationship to urban centers or historic districts which makes the area's conservation essential to the city's history or function.

City Council must create each new area by ordinance. The ordinance may include provisions that modify any portion of the underlying base zone regulations. Such provisions may apply additional requirements or allow exceptions to the standard regulations of the base zone. As the enabling ordinance is currently written, proposals for new development or redevelopment on properties or structures within conservation districts may be reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Design Review Committee, the Historic Preservation Commission, or other board or commission as may be appropriate and will be designated within the specific Conservation District Ordinance.

In 2010, there are two adopted conservation districts in the City of Boise. These include the Near North End Conservation District and the Hyde Park Conservation District. Both areas are also now historic districts, which carry stricter controls. (See Hays Street Historic District on page 22.)

Landmarks

The Boise Historic Preservation Commission also utilizes a Landmark Ordinance that was passed pursuant to State Law. The law is another tool used by the Commission to preserve local resources. The Commission, either upon the request of the City Council, its own initiative, or the request of a property owner, may recommend the designation of a historic landmark. For such designation, a building must meet the criteria set out for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission is required to conduct studies prior to designating a property as a landmark, and then to submit a report to City Council with recommendations for either preservation or restoration. Any suggestions for adaptive reuse or alternative use also would be included in the report, as well as information regarding the financial and administrative responsibility of the person or organization proposing to undertake all

or a portion of the cost of acquisition, maintenance, operation, or restoration. In a case where the property owner has not consented to landmark designation, the report would also include the appraised value of the property.

Following public hearings, City Council makes the final decision on whether to designate a building a landmark. Once so designated, a building owner requesting alterations is required to wait 180 days before demolition, material alteration, removal or remodeling. In situations where a landmark is located within a local historic district, parts of the ordinance which pertain to the districts take precedence over the 180 day waiting period for structural demolition. And, as the law stands today, any landmark designation made for a state-owned property is strictly honorary.

Although there is currently only one designated landmark, Washington School, a recent Preserve America grant for \$20,000 allowed the City of Boise to work on the designation of 31 additional properties as landmarks. The subject properties include seventeen (17) structures that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of the larger district. None of them are in local historic districts and therefore they have little protection from demolition. The landmarking of these properties – which is a work in progress – will help protect them and also aid in historic preservation within the community. The City hopes that the project will lead to increased heritage tourism through the publication and distribution of the books and brochures funded by the grant, bringing awareness to our historic resources. There will also be walking tours, both guided and self-guided.

Chapter 3: Sustainable Boise

Boise's reputation as a western city offering an outstanding quality of life grows each year. That reputation keeps dollars flowing into the City and keeps Boise's residents employed. Sustaining the City's quality of life is critical as Boise grows and develops. Boise's new comprehensive plan, Blueprint Boise, designates Environmental Stewardship its #1 Theme. The City's objectives therein include waste reduction, promotion of energy and water conservation, and alternative energy production. In addition to these laudable goals, Mayor David Bieter signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2006, thereby agreeing to join mayors across the nation to take steps to reduce Boise's greenhouse pollution. A robust historic preservation program can help the City achieve those objectives.

As the National Trust's Carl Elefante states, "The greenest building is...one that is already built." This chapter is focused on integrating historic preservation with the City's overall goal of creating a socially, culturally, environmentally and economically sustainable city. This section of the report will address waste reduction, energy and water conservation, and alternative energy production, focusing on policies that can blend the objectives of historic preservation with those of Environmental Stewardship.

Waste Reduction

Thanks to a variety of widespread trends, Boise's historic neighborhoods have enjoyed a renaissance in popularity that began in the 1990s and continues into the 21st century. Properties in these areas have maintained their values better than property in many other parts of the Treasure Valley, particularly during the recession that began in 2007. Nevertheless, the desirability of these neighborhoods is sometimes dampened by the challenges associated with the actual historic homes that still rest there. Many of the structures in these neighborhoods require maintenance, electric or other upgrades, and are often smaller in square footage than modern families desire. Therefore, the renewed desire to be closer to the urban core but occupy a larger home has led builders and homeowners to search for homes they can justify demolishing or severely altering.

The demolition of existing housing and commercial building stock and the construction of new housing and commercial building stock account for a large amount of waste going to the landfill each year. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, nationwide construction debris accounts for 25% of the waste in the municipal waste stream each year. Of the approximately 164 million tons of construction and demolition waste, 40% is reused, recycled or sent to waste-to-energy facilities, but builders and others in the construction industry send the other 60% to the landfill.³² That 60% waste is unacceptable and almost entirely preventable. According to the National Association of Home Builders, if 25 percent of the buildings demolished every year were deconstructed instead of demolished, approximately 20 million tons of debris could be diverted from landfills.³³

In addition to the demolition waste, remodeling and new construction processes add not only to the increased use of resources but also to the waste stream through scrap waste. The waste from building demolition constitutes nearly half of all building related construction and demolition debris; renovation and remodeling projects are estimated to generate an additional 40 percent of the total debris; and new construction makes up the rest.³⁴

To build a typical, new 2,085-square foot, single-family house – small by many modern families’ demands – requires the following:³⁵

13,127 board feet of lumber	6,212 square feet of sheathing	14 tons of concrete
2,325 square feet of exterior siding	3,100 square feet of roofing material	3,061 square feet of insulation
6,144 square feet of interior wall material	120 linear feet of ducting	15 windows
13 kitchen cabinets and 2 other cabinets	1 kitchen sink	12 interior doors
7 closet doors	2 exterior doors	1 patio door
2 garage doors	1 fireplace	3 toilets
2 bathtubs	1 shower stall	3 bathroom sinks
2,085 square feet of flooring material	68 gallons of paint and coatings	

One way to greatly reduce the amount of waste going to Boise’s landfills is to encourage re-use of Boise’s existing built environment in both its historic residential as well as commercial districts. Although historic structures often require updates, the City should encourage re-use instead of demolitions. The construction industry and individual homeowners often request demolitions because of problems that seem insurmountable but are things that can easily be fixed. For instance, although some historic structures are energy-inefficient, many were built by developers who recognized and worked with the site’s constraints and who used materials that have a very long life. Other historic structures are rotting in some places. Still other historic structures need new siding. And the potential exists for a host of other problems, as there is in any structure. But problems such as these can be tackled in a remodel, eliminating the waste that would ensue from a tear-down, employing more people for a longer period of time, contributing to economic sustainability, and maintaining the historic character of the City.

There are of course times in which saving a structure just cannot be justified. In such situations, the City should provide education on alternatives to demolition for owners who provide a good justification for a tear-down. Deconstruction, the selective dismantling or removal of materials from buildings for reuse or recycling, is one such viable alternative. It is being used across the country as an economic development tool because of its demand for skilled labor and the local markets it creates. Non-

structural deconstruction involves the resale of windows, doors, and appliances, and is a fairly mature market, with organizations such as Second Chance Building Center providing the local retail center. Structural deconstruction, which has a less mature market, can involve used bricks and specialized wood products. Boise's policies should encourage growth in this market as part of its efforts toward environmental stewardship.

Finally, Boise should encourage green building practices on new construction and remodels in historic districts, providing incentives for developers and individual homeowners to build sustainably in the City's most treasured neighborhoods. In collaboration with the Congress for New Urbanism and the Natural Resources Defense Council, the U.S. Green Building Council adopted the Neighborhood Development Rating System through its LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program in 2009. Additionally, the National Association of Homebuilders offers a green home building certification as well as remodel guidelines. Whenever applicable, these standards should be promoted and encouraged by applicants for a certificate of appropriateness.

Goal 3.1. Improve public understanding of the benefits of structural re-use and the available alternatives to demolition.

Policy 3.1a: Educate the public on the role of structural reuse and remodel in the City's larger program of sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Action I Work with neighborhood associations and other partners including the Arts & History Department to conduct workshops and other educational sessions on:

- a) How to prevent waste during a remodel or demolition;
- b) Windows re-sealing in lieu of window replacement;
- c) How to prevent roof waste and the use of sustainable, long lasting roofing materials.

Action II Create printed and web-enabled educational materials on deconstruction in lieu of demolition in historic districts.

- a) A pamphlet should be created and handed out to anyone requesting demolition in a historic district. The pamphlet should be created keeping in mind its potential to be used or altered for a City-wide handout for any demolition permit request. The pamphlet should include information on how to recycle building materials and how to market those materials that are available for sale or re-use. Work with local partners such as Second Chance to create.
- b) The City should create a pamphlet on local resources, including contractors, materials purveyors, and brokers to be utilized for deconstruction.

Policy 3.1b: Discourage the demolition of historic structures both within and outside of local historic districts.

Action I Enact a Demolition Review Ordinance. Such an ordinance could provide the City with oversight of demolition requests for structures more than 50 years old that maintained historic integrity.

Policy 3.1c: Help facilitate the growth of deconstruction industries throughout the City in order to create an economically and environmentally sustainable model of demolition.

Action I Create a list of both private and non-profit Used Building Materials Retail Operations (UBMROs) and building material reuse outlets in the metropolitan area. This list could be posted on a publicly available website. Contractors and non-profit organizations could be encouraged to support these businesses.

Action II Consider the development of a local resource recovery park, a place where companies and organizations involved in building material reuse and deconstruction-related activities can receive tax or other financial incentives. A park such as this could lie on City property near the rail lines in order to serve as a potential building material processing and distribution center for both national and international markets. Businesses and organizations specializing in the reuse of used building materials in furniture, panelized/manufactured housing systems, arts and crafts and other alternative uses could benefit from the establishment of a resource recovery park.

Action III Consider incentives to encourage demolition and renovation contractors to use non-structural and structural deconstruction. One example of an incentive would be to revise local demolition permit procedures to increase the time allowed for deconstruction-related activities or to waive permit fees for contractors utilizing deconstruction methods.

Goal 3.2. Encourage all new construction and additions in historic districts to utilize guidelines outlined by LEED and the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB), both of which include provisions for waste reduction.

Policy 3.2a: Work with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, the local Green Building Council chapter, and the National Association of Homebuilders to provide brochures and other literature about the long-term benefits of “green” construction.

- Action I Provide literature to each applicant for a Certificate of Appropriateness during the pre-hearing meeting with City staff. Hand out the appropriate one-pagers put together by the NAHB, and link to these from the City web site.

- Action II Appoint one or more staff member(s) to participate and stay abreast of the local green building industry. This staff member should review all Commission-level applications for potential to include sustainable or “green” changes.

Energy Conservation and Production

Blueprint Boise urges the City to reduce energy in municipal buildings and new construction. The same goals should exist throughout the City, and especially in the existing built environment.

Citizens often assume that older buildings are energy hogs and that it is more efficient to tear down the old and create a more energy efficient new structure. Likewise, there is a tendency to want to replace old pieces of homes with new to make a home more efficient. These are misguided approaches.³⁶ New studies suggest that it takes 35-50 years for an energy-efficient new building to save the amount of energy lost in demolishing an existing building and that buildings constructed prior to 1920 are the most energy efficient of any except those constructed after 2000.³⁷ The embodied energy that is lost by demolishing an existing structure together with the new energy it takes to construct new materials makes it clear that preservation is the way to go.

Nevertheless, most historic buildings are not as energy efficient as they should be, often needing window work and added insulation. Although windows are commonly named as the culprit of inefficient buildings and are a homeowner’s first step in an upgrade, the United States Department of Energy finds that only 10% of air leakage in homes is attributable to windows.³⁸ Old homes also often need additional insulation in the attic, through which more heat is lost than windows. Even so, homeowners frequently replace their original windows with modern windows made of modern materials such as vinyl and metal. Windows such as these offer a short life span compared to a structure’s original windows, and once they fail, they are difficult to recycle, usually ending up in the landfill. This environmentally insensitive lifecycle can be stopped with effective public education, and it is important to educate Boise residents on energy efficient options other than window replacement.

Many structures with original wood windows can be made more efficient with weather stripping and storm windows, actions that are significantly less expensive than replacement windows and which maintain a structure’s historic character as well as making it energy efficient. The National Institute of Building Sciences tells us the following:

A traditional single-glazed, double hung window has an R-value of 1, compared to R3 for a new double-glazed, low-e, double hung window. If the historic wall assembly has an R-value in the teens, taking a window from R1 to R3 will not provide sufficient energy savings to offset the cost of replacement windows and associated waste. The primary cause of infiltration can be addressed with jamb insulation, weather stripping, and trim repair. For an extra layer between

the occupant and the elements, a storm window can be mounted to the existing window—interior or exterior—with little change to the character of the original unit.³⁹

Windows that are more than 60 years old are likely made of old growth wood, which is dense and more durable than even new wood windows, which will not last as long as the originals.⁴⁰ The National Institute of Building Sciences notes that windows built from old growth wood can function indefinitely, with improved performance achieved through storm windows, caulk, and weather-stripping. Studies show that simple improvements such as these can produce efficiency similar to new insulated glass windows.⁴¹ Additionally, the wood in windows manufactured prior to 1940 is generally more warp and rot-resistant.

Finally, historic homes are equally good candidates for new energy-production and energy conservation technology as new homes, and solar panels and metal roofs need to be considered as options on certain structures. Preserving the character of Boise’s local historic districts is of the utmost importance. However, the City should recognize and encourage the growing demand for on-site solar energy production in historic districts. Although the placement of solar panels can present challenges on historic buildings, their use should be encouraged as long as placement is sensitive to the building’s character.

Goal 3.3. Encourage the maintenance and upgrading of existing historic structures instead of replacement.

Policy 3.3a: Working with partners, provide regular updates to research on historic home maintenance as it relates to energy efficiency.

Action I Work with local partners to put on an annual workshop and training for local window contractors, bringing in expertise from outside the area if necessary. Those attending will be placed on a list of City-certified contractors capable of upgrading and maintaining historic windows and other wood features. List of contractors should be updated annually and posted on the City’s web site.

Action II Update design guidelines regularly for both residential and commercial districts. Guidelines should be updated when new materials are under scrutiny by local contractors or residents and are regularly being reviewed by the Commission.

Action III Encourage homeowners to obtain free energy audits from local service providers to determine alternative methods of saving energy besides window replacement. Maintain list of service providers who offer said services.

Goal 3.4. Encourage energy conservation and use of new materials or technologies when appropriate to the site and structure.

Policy 3.4a: Amend Boise’s residential design guidelines, and add ordinance language to better guide the placement of solar and other alternative energy technology on historic structures within protected districts and on designated landmarks.

Action I Currently, Boise’s Design Guidelines for Residential Historic Districts guide homeowners to place solar collectors on rear and side elevations. Examine placing new language in the Guidelines that would provide more specific guidance regarding non-character defining façade placement and would address any differences between placements on contributing vs. non-contributing structures. Use Ypsilanti, Michigan and Breckenridge, Colorado for guidance.

Action II After examining changes to Residential Guidelines, amend Historic Preservation ordinance to encourage greater use and placement of solar collectors on historic structures consistent with said guidelines. The solar policy should be codified.

Policy 3.4b: Revise residential and commercial guidelines to address the issue of metal roofs in historic districts and on landmarks.

Action I Although the current resident guidelines discourage the use of metal roofing materials in a corrugated or standing seam manner, they should be revised to acknowledge the appropriate use of metal roofs in certain circumstances. Metal roofs reflect heat away from structures and make them more energy efficient, and can help with waste reduction. Widely used asphalt shingles absorb heat, are rarely recycled, and add considerably to the waste stream going to the landfill.⁴² Metal roofs offer homeowners the ability to use a large percentage of recycled materials and to recycle the roof itself if replacement becomes necessary. LEED and NAHB both award points toward certification for the use of metal roofs.

Historic Landscapes

Boise’s historic neighborhoods are, for the most part, covered with varieties of Kentucky bluegrass. Lawn grasses are not native to the high desert region of which Boise is a part, and are known to consume vast amounts of water and fertilizer. Because Boise is water-scarce, receiving only approximately 11-12 inches of rain each year, it is important for the City to strike a balance between appropriate landscaping and preserving the historic landscapes of these neighborhoods. Boise’s existing historic residential guidelines steer residents away from using hardened materials for parking areas that can be seen from the right of way, and provide for a balance between hardscape and open space by providing a rough percentage of each that should exist on any given parcel. However, the language is focused more on ensuring that homeowners do not install excessive impervious surface, not on preserving historic landscapes.

Blueprint Boise 10' identifies key policies to protect the City's tree canopy, preserve water quality, and promote water efficiency. Those same policies are applicable in Boise's historic districts. In fact, protection of the tree canopy is perhaps most significant and relevant to Boise's historic districts, which represent some of the oldest neighborhoods in the City and therefore contain some of its most mature trees. Department of Parks and Recreation have policies on which trees are permitted in the public right of way, and also maintain a list of water-wise plantings. In addition to lists of allowable and encouraged plants, it would be useful to identify rough percentages of live plants and hardscape allowable within City historic districts.

Despite these excellent policies already in place, Boise needs to address the ongoing relationship between landscaping in a desert climate and the protection of historic landscapes, which can often be at odds. New guidelines would need to address the growing urban agriculture movement which is leading many residents to plant large garden plots in their front and back yards, as well as the need to cultivate plants that demand less water and fewer chemicals to grow. Encouraging urban agriculture is a way to further increase Boise's quality of life, since it is a way to foster greater community. Urban gardens also mitigate storm water runoff, give new life to toxic soils, block the transmission of urban noise, produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide, and provide shade for controlling temperatures.⁴³ They also provide long-term habitats for insects such as bees which are critical to the ecosystem, and can put underutilized or vacant land into productive use. Such land uses within a city are well accepted tenets of sustainable city policies. Boise's agricultural heritage makes policies such as these a natural choice, and the City should allow such landscape restoration where landowners desire it.

Nationwide, there is a general lack of landscaping guidelines that specifically relate to historic sites and structures and therefore no model to follow. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is excited to identify a town or city that could serve as a pilot to create such guidelines. Boise would be an excellent candidate to receive such a grant. These guidelines can be small in nature and do not have to represent a major policy initiative for the City.

Goal 3.5. Preserve historic landscapes, including residential green spaces, while recognizing Boise's water constraints and encouraging the use of water-wise landscaping.

Policy 3.5a: Enact landscape guidelines that address landscape issues in a desert climate together with preservation of historic landscapes in neighborhoods, historic parks, medians, and open space areas.

Action I Survey historic landscapes in the City to determine which landscapes need special protection or plans outside of existing historic districts.

Action II Once survey is complete, apply for grant money to create landscape guidelines for the necessary landscapes.

Goal 3.6. Encourage urban agriculture as a way to decrease car trips to stores, improve local economic relationships, and restore urban gardens as part of Boise's suburban landscape.

Policy 3.6a: Examine amending current code to allow for agriculture in planting strips and other parts of properties not currently allowed.

Action I Amend City Code to allow and encourage urban agriculture in historic districts.

Goal 3.7. Minimize pesticide use and fertilizers, which will reduce water use as well as reduce polluted runoff which impacts water quality in our aquifer and our surface water.

Policy 3.7a: Integrate Boise Parks and Recreation plant guidelines into the current residential guidelines.

Action I Provide links to the Parks and Recreation Department plant list on the Historic Preservation website in appropriate places.

Action II Maintain water-wise plant list/brochure at Planning and Development Services to hand out to each applicant for a Certificate of Appropriateness where landscaping is involved in remodel plans.

Conclusion

By implementing these changes, the City will have made great progress toward policies that encourage *both* a sustainable city and the preservation of Boise's historic neighborhoods.

Chapter 4: Unprotected Resources and Sites: Creating a Comprehensive Set of Tools

As Boise stands today looking out at its historic landscape, there are key historic preservation challenges remaining for which solutions are necessary.

1. First, there are a number of structures within historic districts that were originally inventoried as non-contributing but which have, since the first survey, reached the 50-year mark and may now be contributing;
2. Second, Boise contains significant historic resources that remain outside of designated districts; and
3. Third, there are many neighborhoods in Boise that were built in the postwar period which may be eligible for either Historic or Conservation District designation.

This chapter will guide the Commission in its continued implementation of existing tools, as well as suggesting new tools that may prove useful in solving the challenges outlined above.

Existing Tools

Boise City maintains a good variety of regulatory tools at its disposal for the advancement of historic preservation. Many of the existing tools have been used to protect structures important to Boise's unique architectural and historical heritage; some have been used more intensively than others.

Existing tools include:

- conservation districts
- historic districts;
- façade easements;
- landmark designation;
- design guidelines for both commercial and residential districts.

However, in spite of this rich toolbox, there are many historic Boise buildings that have yet to be protected, and it is widely agreed upon that additional tools are needed. A look forward toward the future of historic preservation in Boise will keep the City on the forefront of national trends and in keeping with other cities in the West. Additional tools in the hands of the both the Historic Preservation Commission as well as Arts and History Commission will provide those bodies with the opportunity to approach modern concerns with more than simply the creation of a historic district based in geographical boundaries. As the program of Historic Preservation ages, new challenges require the inclusion of policies that will help preserve more modern architecture.

Historic Resource Surveys

Boise's Historic Preservation ordinance gives the Commission the ability to conduct resource surveys. Many surveys have been done during the course of the past 30 years, but there are additional surveys that remain to be completed in order for Boise to gain a thorough grasp on its historic inventory. There are homes within existing districts whose non-contributing status may need to be re-examined in light of the 50-year limit. Additionally, there are entire neighborhoods whose postwar architecture also now meets the National Register's age criteria to be considered historic. For Boise to maintain a robust program of historic preservation, these areas need to be considered.

In surveying and exploring the protection of some of Boise's postwar neighborhoods and architecture, the City would be joining a much larger trend. Nationwide, there is a movement underway in the historic preservation community to protect the country's more recent past. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has written papers and booklets on the subject, and Preservation Idaho, a local non-profit organization, has hosted a local conference regarding the matter. Other western cities, such as Los Angeles, have devoted a large amount of resources to a program of protection and education for its postwar architectural inventory. Because the National Register of Historic Places has set a 50-year age limit for a building to be eligible for consideration, that means that structures built in the 1950s and soon, the 1960s, are eligible to at least be inspected.

Buildings constructed during our recent past are sometimes decried as not worthy of preservation, because they lack the public appreciation of older structures. Often, the buildings that fall under the "recent past" discussion were built to replace older structures that were torn down during the era of urban renewal. Ironically, it was often the buildings torn down to make room for the more modern ones that sparked the original Historic Preservation movement, yet those "new" structures are approaching the 50-year mark and will soon be deemed historic by that one benchmark at least. Buildings such as Boise's current City Hall are but one example.

As noted in Chapter 2 of this plan, the 1950s represented an unprecedented era of homebuilding. The end of World War II, the baby boom, the application of assembly-line techniques to the homebuilding industry, and the Federal Government's implementation of home-buying incentives all contributed to the boom. In terms of architectural style, the ubiquity of automobiles caused builders to adorn homes with attached garages or carports to accommodate the postwar, car-oriented American lifestyle. This era of Cold War isolationism manifested itself in homes that were entered from inside of a garage and which emphasized the openness of the interior floor plan while closing itself off from the front door and thus, the rest of the world. This was also a period when architects experimented with many new materials on homes, including vinyl and aluminum siding, particularly in later years of the style. While the Ranch style home went out of fashion in the 1960s, it has, in recent years, undergone a renaissance. Young families are purchasing these dated homes and renovating them in urban, hip ways that align with modern, 21st century lives.

Ranch homes and other modern architecture began to appear throughout the West in the post-World War II era. Boise, in addition to being home to Tourtellotte & Hummell in the early 20th Century, was also home to an important mid-century architect whose homes and other structures are scattered

throughout Boise and Idaho. Architect Art Troutner was a significant figure in postwar Boise history. A native Idahoan, he was born in 1922 in eastern Idaho. Following service in World War II, he moved to Boise where he finished his architecture degree. By the mid-1950s, he had a long list of clients and boasted a distinct architectural style influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright but quintessentially modern. His designs worked with a site's natural features, but utilized geometric shapes and integrated natural materials such as Oakley quartzite stone. His buildings represent some of the best of Boise's modern architecture, and can be seen on Warm Springs Avenue and the Boise Foothills, as well as on Fort Street in the form of the Boise Little Theater. In the course of his work, Troutner designed the Truss-deck in the late 1950s, which combined metal and wood products to form a lightweight building material that could serve as floor joists or roof beams. He went on to found the Truss-Joist Corporation to great success. In 2008, the Department of Interior created a National Register Historic District containing three of his homes in Idaho Falls, demonstrating the significance of his work.⁴⁴

With regard to Troutner's work, his significance to the architecture as well as the history of Boise makes a study of his buildings worthwhile. The existing ordinance provides for designating historic districts that contain structures representing the work of a "designer, architect or craftsman whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the city, state, or nation." There is nothing in the code that limits such districts to a contiguous area. Designation of a Troutner historic district might be an excellent opportunity for partnership with other historic preservation groups to design driving tours and literature about this well-known Boise architect, thereby improving public appreciation for postwar architecture.

In addition to Troutner's designs, there are a great number of Boise neighborhoods that represent these important trends in the postwar era and include large clusters of vernacular postwar architecture. These neighborhoods represent Americans' desire to leave the central city and obtain more land, and can be found in what were newly accessible areas such as the Boise Foothills and the Boise Bench. Once seen as too far from town, they were now easily reached with cars, which a great majority of residents owned by mid-century. Some of these neighborhoods may be eligible for conservation district or historic district designation and are worthy of survey. Those include the Randolph Robertson neighborhood near Cole and Overland, the homes near Vista Village, and the Sargent City neighborhood, constructed during World War II for officers and funded by the Federal Government. The latter was one of the first tract housing developments in Boise and one which opened the Bench area to further development. It is important to note that the Owyhee-Kootenai area, also on the Central Bench, was the subject of a 2007 dashboard survey prompted by area residents who were interested in a conservation district for the area.⁴⁵ An official proposal is still pending.

In addition to the Bench neighborhoods noted above, other areas to examine would be those in the Boise Foothills, including early phases of the Highlands, Boise Heights and Foothills East.

Some of these neighborhoods might qualify for either a historic preservation based or a neighborhood planning conservation district. Boise City code requires that applicants for these designations prove that the proposed area have either "a distinctive character with identifiable attributes, embodied in architecture, use, urban design, or history," or, that the area has a "recognized neighborhood identity

and a definable physical character.” Such character can take the form of relatively uniform setbacks, architectural style, or any other number of attributes.

Because Boise’s Historic Preservation Code provides authority for the Commission to undertake survey work of City historic properties, this plan proposes that the Commission work with its partners in historic preservation to determine the neighborhoods most in need of recognition.

The following goals are geared toward formalizing use of existing tools in order to maintain the high-functioning status of the current Commission, as well as utilizing those same tools in order to solve some of the challenges outlines above.

Goal 4.1. Retain a Staff and Commission that remains up to date on new construction materials.

Policy 4.1a: Provide at least one (1) workshop per year on new construction materials, including windows, as relevant.

Action I Create and maintain list of local vendors who can provide presentations for the Commission and Staff.

Action II Create predictable schedule such that presentations happen around the same time each year, either during Preservation Month (May), or during a time when applications are slower (winter).

Goal 4.2. Maintain updated information on City’s inventory of historic resources.

Policy 4.2a: Launch a process to re-examine properties already surveyed within historic districts.

Action I Compile a list of structures from current inventory in historic districts that are 1) now more than 50 years old, and 2) currently listed as non-contributing.

Action II Obtain grants or other funds to re-survey this list.

Action III Where appropriate, begin process to re-classify structures which now qualify for contributing status.

Goal 4.3. Begin a program of postwar architecture appreciation.

Policy 4.3a: Work with historic preservation partners throughout the Treasure Valley to begin an educational program related to postwar architecture.

Action I Form a postwar architecture consortium to identify especially interesting properties. These might include some Troutner buildings and some particularly outstanding vernacular structures.

Action II Work with consortium to design a brochure and driving tour of said properties.

Action III With consortium partners, host another postwar architecture program.

Policy 4.3b: Inventory the City's postwar historic resources to determine need or eligibility for protection.

Action I Staff and Commission identify highest potential neighborhoods for survey.

Action II Obtain grants through Certified Local Government, National Trust, and Idaho Heritage Trust funds and City budget process for survey work.

Action III Survey neighborhoods, and determine most appropriate designation – if any.

Goal 4.4. Identify Additional Candidates for Landmark Status

Policy 4.4a: Pursue the listing of additional properties for landmark status which have architectural, historical, or cultural value to Boise.

Action I Work with regional preservation partners to identify threatened buildings or sites for listing. Examples might include Boise's only Google style building, the Tepanyaki Steak House on Garden St. at the entrance to the Connector.

Action II Obtain grant money to survey and landmark identified properties.

Guidelines

The Historic Preservation Guidelines have been a very useful tool for residents as well as for City Staff and Commissioners. It is imperative that the City keep this tool up to date so that changes in materials and styles can be managed efficiently in Boise's historic districts.

Goal 4.5. Continue to update guidelines for both residential and commercial structures as styles and materials evolve and neighborhoods change.

Policy 4.5a: Review commercial and residential guidelines annually with Commission to identify areas of potential change.

Action I Include review in annual planning schedule to determine any need for updates.

New Tools

In addition to the tools noted above, community input suggests that Boise needs additional tools. The losses of the previous decade have left citizens asking the City to implement new tools that might help them preserve structures of importance to Boise's heritage. Like the schools that were lost, there are numerous other buildings – both state-owned and otherwise – that need an additional option for protection. While the landmark designation is a good start, it provides only a delay in demolition and nothing to actually prevent demolition after the time has passed.

The following goals will go far toward helping Boise preserve its heritage.

Goal 4.6. Improve local coordination with others over historic and cultural resources within City limits.

Policy 4.6a: Work with Boise History Consortium to devise strategy to improve local oversight for historic resources through an amendment to state law.

Action I Hold a meeting or series of meetings with representatives from various groups, including Preservation Idaho, SHPO, County and other municipal Historical Commissions, etc. to discuss potential options for amending state law.

Action II Research historic preservation laws in other states regarding state or quasi-state buildings.

Action III Engage in joint lobbying effort to change state law to improve local control.

Goal 4.7: Provide building owners with additional incentives for historic preservation.

Policy 4.7a: Develop Transfer of Development Rights program.

Action I Explore best practices for a policy of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) in Boise through formation of a committee. A TDR program can accomplish many land use goals within a city. It can be an especially effective tool in accomplishing preservation goals, particularly for buildings that lie outside historic district boundaries. Committee should be composed of City leaders as well as interested community landowners to explore these programs used nationally in cities such as New York City, San Francisco, and Salt Lake City. Committee should intend to make a recommendation for adoption.

Action II Implement a TDR program, enabled by State Code 67-4619.

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²⁴ Ibid.

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²⁸ Hodges, et al, *Boise's North End*, p. 14.

²⁹ Perry Bauer, et al, *Statement...Proposed East End*, p. 4.

³⁰ Perry Bauer, et al, *Statement...Proposed East End*, p. 5.

³¹ Perry Bauer, et al, *Statement...Proposed East End*, p. 7.

³² EPA, OSWER Innovation Project Success Story: Deconstruction, U.S. EPA, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, November 2009.

³³ National Association of Home Builders, "Deconstruction: Building Disassembly and Material Salvage," 1998 [get a better citation as well as more specific information in this section.]

³⁴ Ken Sandler (Environmental Protection Agency), "Analyzing What's Recyclable in C&D Waste," *BioCycle*, November 2003 (<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/debris-new/basic.htm>), p. 52.

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- ³⁵ National Home Builders Association, 1998; <http://www.nhba.org/>; Also in Daniel D. Chiras, *The Natural House: A Complete Guide to Healthy, Energy-Efficient, Environmental Homes* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2000), 8.
- ³⁶ National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Sustainability by the Numbers," <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/sustainability-numbers.html>, accessed May 3, 2010.
- ³⁷ National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Sustainability by the Numbers," <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/sustainability-numbers.html>, accessed May 3, 2010.
- ³⁸ Position Statement: Weatherizing Existing Windows, National Trust for Historic Preservation, at www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/position-statement-windows.htm, accessed May 4, 2010.
- ³⁹ http://www.wbdg.org/resources/sustainable_hp.php#rcas accessed 4/30/2010.
- ⁴⁰ Historic Wood Windows, National Trust for Historic Preservation, July 2008: <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/additional-resources/July2008WindowsTipSheet.pdf>, accessed May 3, 2010.
- ⁴¹ http://www.wbdg.org/resources/sustainable_hp.php#rcas accessed 4/30/2010.
- ⁴² An estimated 11 million tons of asphalt shingles are generated and disposed annually, equally 8% of the total building-related debris stream. Ken Sandler, EPA, "Analyzing What's Recyclable in C&D Debris," *Biocycle* (November 2003), 51-54 (roofing statistics at 53).
- ⁴³ <http://www.cityfarmer.org/alexandraUA.html>, Canada's Office of Urban Agriculture, accessed June 10, 2010.
- ⁴⁴ Art Troutner Houses Historic District, Registration Form, 2008.
- ⁴⁵ Information Packet, Proposed Owyhee-Kootenai Conservation District, c. 2007.