

# DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE HISTORIC DISTRICT CHARACTER AREA #7: South Main Street Residential



BRECKENRIDGE, COLORADO

December 1991

Updated 1998

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**NOTE:**

A (P) symbol adjacent to a design standard indicates that it is a "Priority" that must be met in order to be in "substantial compliance" with the guidelines, under policy 5A of the town's Development Code.

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*Historic photographs are provided courtesy of the Summit Historical Society and the Colorado Historical Society.*

## **#7. South Main Street Residential Character Area**

*Note: The special design standards presented here for the South Main Street Residential Character Area apply in addition to the general standards on pages 19 through 26 of the main book of standards for all of the historic district.*

### **Location description**

This area includes both sides of Main Street, from Washington Avenue on the north to just below Jefferson Avenue on the south.

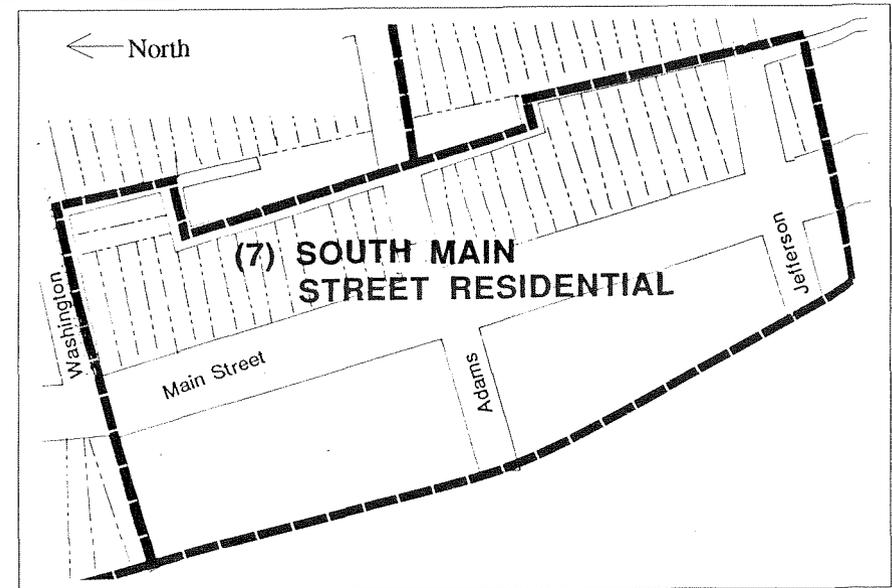
### **Character of historic development**

The northern portion of this area began developing with a few commercial structures, many of which were destroyed in a fire in 1896. It subsequently evolved into an area of fine residential structures. Many of the buildings were one and one-and-a-half stories in height, although some two-story houses occurred. Large front and side yards were notable features of these sites, with buildings set back from the street. The area remained this way for many years. Some lots remained undeveloped.

Almost exclusively, the residential buildings that appeared were wood frame with clapboard siding. In fact, only one brick house is known to have been built in this area. Buildings were rectangular in form, with the narrow end of the building facing the street. Gabled roofs were typical for primary structures, and their ridge line was usually oriented perpendicular to the street. Shed roofs were often seen on secondary structures, which were located to the rear of primary buildings. The main houses usually had painted finishes. The more utilitarian out-buildings often remained unpainted; this distinguished them from the houses. Landscaping consisted chiefly of trees planted in yards and of small flower gardens.

### **Existing character**

Today, this area is in transition. Many historic residential structures have been adapted to commercial uses. New commercial buildings also have been introduced that convey a non-residential look. A major goal for this character area is to strengthen its historic residential tone. As a result, the design standards for new construction encourage concepts that are residential in appearance.



The boundary of the South Main Street Residential Character Area.



Residential structures with large porches were a part of the historic character of this area. (Photo ca. 1930's, courtesy of Summit Historical Society)

## #7. SOUTH MAIN STREET



Visual continuity in this area is a result of building elements that appeared early in the town's development. Gable roofs, clapboard siding, along with side and front yards are some of these elements.

### Landscape and site design

Most buildings, including new structures, convey the historic residential setback character. However, the advent of some new multi-level structures with plazas at the sidewalk edge has blurred front yard perceptions in some locations. Alleys are found in some blocks, but are not completed behind all buildings.

### Building form and materials

A mix of wood and brick is seen on the street today. Wood includes painted lap siding and unpainted, peeled logs. Most buildings retain a gabled roof line, although several newer structures have introduced flat roofs. Some newer buildings have roofs with more varied, arched forms. These contrast with the historic building forms and weaken the sense of historic setting.

### Building details

Smaller, vertically-oriented windows were standard on buildings in this area historically. Doors were similarly proportioned. Ornamental trim, when it was used, was applied only in limited amounts, usually in the eaves and on porches. Some newer buildings have deviated from this established character by introducing designs with large surfaces of display windows, both on the first and second floors. These weaken the perception of the residential character of the area and are considered inappropriate.

### Historic preservation issues

Some very significant residential buildings survive in this area that merit special protection. These include the Barney Ford House, the Miller House and the Theobald Offices. Providing an appropriate context for these important resources is a design goal in this character area.

Of particular significance is a collection of historic residential structures which remain relatively intact in the 300 block of South Main. The preservation of these structures and their historic context is a critical priority.

### Design goal for the character area

The primary goal for the South Main Street Residential Character Area is to re-establish and enhance its historic residential character while recognizing that new commercial uses will occur.

*Conceptual standards for the South Main Street Residential Character Area follow:*

Building Setbacks

Policy:

New buildings should strengthen the perception of residential-type site characteristics found in the area. This pattern of setbacks varies within each block. Some sites are adjacent to historic residential structures where yards and deep setbacks are typical. These characteristics should be respected. Other sites may be adjacent to newer, non-traditional commercial buildings constructed closer to the sidewalk or have sunken plazas. These buildings deviate from the historic character of the area and are not the context with which to relate. In the 200 block of South Main, historic setbacks are typically uniform, whereas a greater variety exists in the 300 block.

Design Standards:



**235. Strengthen the perception of the traditional residential-type setbacks in the area.**

- This is a very important standard, which must be met.
- New buildings should be setback from the street to provide a sense of front yard.
- Historic buildings that are located at the sidewalk edge should remain in their existing location.
- Use setbacks similar to those of established historic houses that exist nearby. The minimum setback should be 8 feet, but the appropriate setback may be greater in the context of adjacent or nearby historic structures. Setbacks should also be in proportion to building height.
- Side yards may be defined by trees or fences.
- If new construction will be adjacent to an historic structure, it must be set back at least the same dimension as the older structure.



Building setbacks from the street were typical. Mature evergreens dramatize the front yard character of this historic residential-type structure on South Main.



Front yards that include "residential" landscaping are appropriate.



**236. Maintain the residential character of yards, especially in front and side yards visible from the street.**

- Front yards should be designed predominantly with plant materials, including trees and grass, as opposed to hard surfaced paving.
- Large areas of hard-surfaces in front yards are inappropriate. A maximum of 40% of the front yard may be hard-surfaced paving or decking.
- A minimum of 40% of the front yard should be planted as lawn.
- New development should take advantage of opportunities to provide view corridors through sites along side yards. This is especially appropriate along the west side of Main Street where views to the Ten Mile Range are noteworthy.
- Also take advantage of opportunities to provide pedestrian access through sites to connect with town-wide pedestrian routes. (See the urban design plan for downtown Breckenridge.)

Parking

Policy:

Off-street parking should not be visible from Main Street in this character area. As much as is possible, the visual impact of cars should be minimized, particularly with respect to parking provided on individual building lots. In areas adjacent to historic residential structures, front yards should retain a rustic, lawn-like image. The front edge of the yard should be clearly defined.

Design Standard:

**237. Where parking is to be provided on site, locate it to the rear of buildings.**

- Screen parking from view of the street with fences and plant materials.
- When parking is located to the rear on the west side of Main, provide convenient pedestrian access to the alley walk also. (See the Downtown Urban Design Plan.)

Policy:

Parking areas are anticipated in the rear of buildings where pedestrian walkways are expected to develop. This will especially be the case on the west side of Main Street, along the Blue River. These areas should be attractive to pedestrians.

Design Standard:

**238. Design parking lots to be visually interesting to pedestrians.**

- Use paving designs that will encourage pedestrian use.
- Screen service equipment where feasible. (See standards for out-buildings.)

Building Scale

Policy:

The historic building scale should be respected. Typically, historic buildings of between 400 and 2,300 square feet survive today. The average size of representative historic structures surviving today is 1,470 square feet.

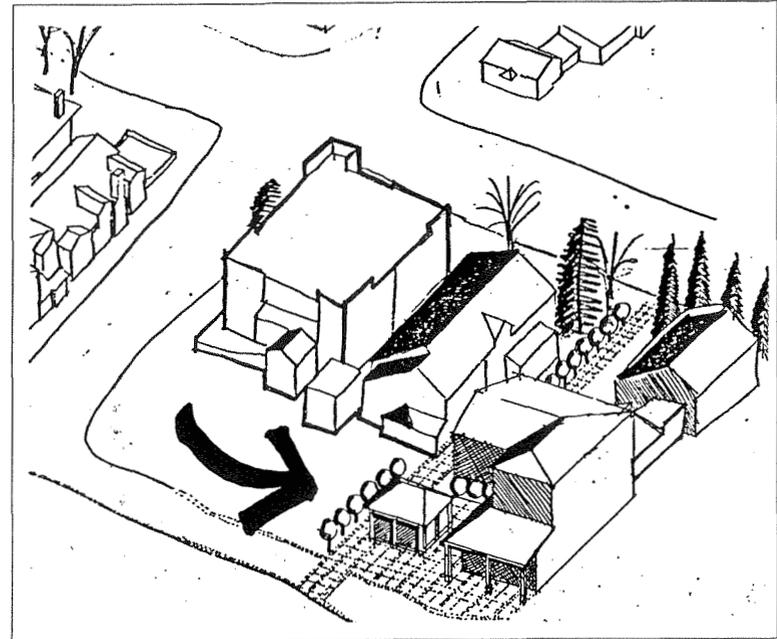
Design Standards:

**P**

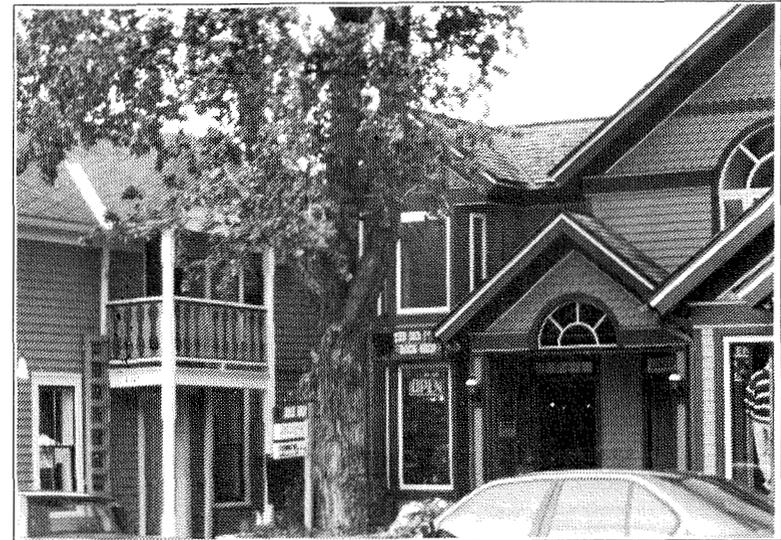
**239. New buildings should be in scale with existing historic and supporting buildings in the South Main Street Residential Character Area.**

- Development densities of less than nine units per acre are recommended.

Under 9 Units per acre of above ground density. If the total above ground density of the development is under 9 UPA, then an individual building module may be as large as the historic maximum size for the Character Area.



Develop the site as a collection of separate structures to reduce the mass of individual buildings.



Use building and roof forms typical of the historic character of South Main Street.

## #7. SOUTH MAIN STREET

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Between 9 and 12 Units per acre of above ground density. Additional densities up to a maximum of 12 UPA may be considered in limited circumstances only if the conditions listed below are met:

1. No individual building module size should exceed the historic average for the Character Area.
  - a. The building area of any individual, detached structure remains under the historic average of that seen in historic structures in the Character Area. A series of individual structures may also be clustered on a site in a manner similar to that seen historically.
  - b. Individual building modules are under the historic average of that seen historically and the modules are linked with connections that are clearly subordinate in scale such that a distinct separation of building modules results.
  - c. If a building module exceeds the historic average, then the project should be deemed to be in violation of this Priority Policy.
2. All other design standards are adequately met such that the project is in substantial compliance with all scale related criteria.
3. The absolute width of primary facades is in scale with those in the historic context. In addition, a significant portion of the front elevation is one story in height.
4. The overall historic mass and scale of the block will be preserved.
5. Any historic property on the site is preserved.
  - a. No significant portions of a historic property would be altered or demolished to accommodate the increased building size.
  - b. The historic property will be rehabilitated as a part of the first phase of the undertaking.

- c. The new construction will be compatible in mass, scale and character with the historic building, as defined in the design standards.
- 6. Historic buildings on adjacent properties are not negatively affected by the larger mass, as defined in the design standards.

Over 12 Units per acre of above ground density. If the total above ground floor area of the site exceeds 12 UPA, the project shall be deemed to be in violation of this Priority Policy.

- Locating some building area below grade to minimize the mass of the structures is encouraged.
- Locate larger masses back from public view.
- Use landscaping to minimize the mass of structures.

**P** 240. **Develop the site as a collection of separate structures to reduce the mass of individual buildings.**

- Providing a garage separate from the main structure is preferred.
- Creating outbuildings to provide additional storage space, rather than increasing the bulk of the main building, is encouraged.

Form and Shape

Policy:

New buildings should reinforce the perception of the historic forms and shapes of the area. In terms of building form and materials, the South Main Street Residential Character Area is characterized by sloped gable roofs and rectangular building forms. These simple shapes are sometimes combined to create larger, more complex building forms.

Design Standards:

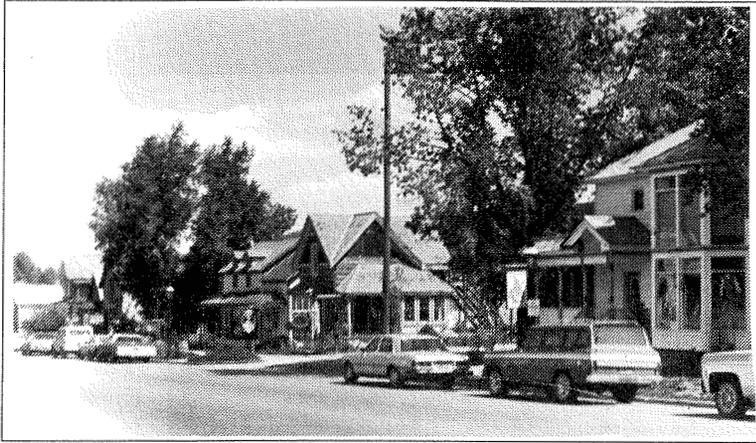
**P** 241. **Use building forms similar to those found historically in the area.**

- Use simple building forms, especially rectangular ones oriented with the narrow side parallel to the street.
- Keep components of individual building elements in scale with those found historically.



Use building forms similar to those found historically in the area.

## #7. SOUTH MAIN STREET



Use roof forms that reflect the angle, scale and proportion of historic buildings in the character area.

**P**

**242. Use roof forms that reflect the angle, scale, and proportion of those of historic buildings in the character area.**

- Gabled roofs should appear as the dominant roof form in any project.
- Gable roofs with the gable end facing the street are especially encouraged.
- Gable roofs should have a slope similar to those used historically.

**243. Maintain the typically simple character of roofs.**

- Note that many gable roofs were accented with dormers, but the dormers were used in limited numbers on individual buildings.

### Building Height

Policy:

Historic buildings in the area are one and two stories in height. Similarity in building heights is desired to help establish a sense of visual continuity and to respect the sense of character established by the small sizes of original buildings. Building heights for new structures should be perceived to be similar in scale to those of historic buildings.

Design Standard:

**P**

**244. Heights of new buildings should be similar to those of nearby historic structures.**

- Primary facades as seen from the street should be one or two stories tall.
- Refer to height limits established by ordinance for this area. (Note that the height limits are absolute maximums and do not imply that all building can reach these limits.)

### Façade Widths

**Policy:**

New buildings should have primary façades similar in dimension to those found historically. Typical building widths of surviving historic buildings range between 18 and 29 feet; the average is 24 feet.

**Design Standard:**

**P 245. Reinforce typical narrow front facade widths that are typical of historic buildings in the area.**

- Projects that incorporate no more than 50 feet of lot frontage are preferred.
- The front facade of a building may not exceed 30 feet in width.

### Building Materials

**Policy:**

The historic district should be perceived as a collection of wooden structures. A strong uniformity in building materials is seen in the area. Most structures, both historic and more contemporary, have horizontal lap siding. This material is usually painted. A few historic log buildings serve as accents to the lap siding standard. This uniformity of materials should be respected.

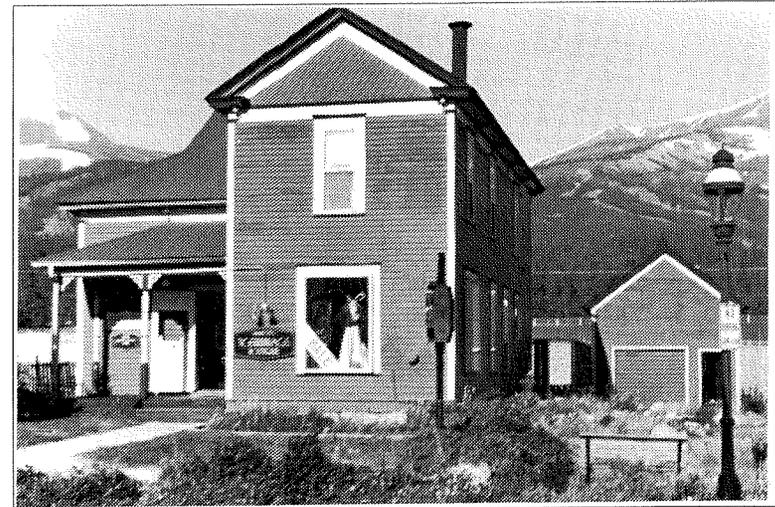
**Design Standard:**

**P 246. Maintain the present balance of building materials found in the Character Area.**

- Use painted wood lap siding as the primary building material. An exposed lap dimension of approximately 4 inches is appropriate. This helps establish a sense of scale for buildings that is similar to that found historically.
- Contemporary interpretations of these historically-compatible materials are discouraged. Wood imitation products are discouraged as primary façade materials because they often fail to age well in the Breckenridge climate. The long term durability of siding materials will be considered.



New buildings should have primary façades similar in dimension to those found historically. (Photo: 1975)



Use painted wood lap siding as the primary building material. (Photo: 1975)

## #7. SOUTH MAIN STREET

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- Modular panel materials are inappropriate.
- Masonry (brick or stone) may only be considered as an accent material. Stone indigenous to the mountains around Breckenridge may be considered.
- Logs are discouraged.
- Rough-sawn, stained or unfinished siding materials are inappropriate on primary structures.

### Policy:

Steeply-pitched roofs are the predominant roof style because they serve well to shed snow in this high snow-fall community. Roofing materials have a significant impact on overall design and should be compatible in pattern, texture and color with those used historically in the area.

### Design Standard:



### **247. Use roofing materials that are similar to those found historically.**

- Smooth-sawn wooden shingles and rolled seam sheet metal are appropriate materials. These are encouraged.
- Newer materials, such as asphalt shingles, may be considered if their appearance will be similar in scale and texture to the historic roofing materials.
- Rough-split shake shingles are inappropriate.
- Matte finishes are required to minimize glare from roofs.

## Outbuildings

Smaller outbuildings, usually located to the rear of the main structure, are seen on many lots. The scale of the primary structure is established by contrast with these smaller structures. The supporting structures are important features of the historic districts and contribute to the sense of historic character.

Policy:

Barns, storage sheds, and outhouses are typical building types that are a part of the scene in historic Breckenridge. These structures served practical functions essential to daily life in the community. Where historic sheds survive, they help to convey this sense of character and help demonstrate how life was lived in earlier days. This tradition of developing a site with a complex of buildings should be continued in new construction. Providing new uses in smaller outbuildings is especially encouraged along the Blue River, where the town is completing its river walk system.

Design Standard:

**248. Use secondary structures in new development.**

- Consider housing utilitarian functions, such as parking, storage, and waste receptacles in secondary structures.
- Using secondary structures will help reduce the perceived scale of the development by dividing the total floor area into a cluster of smaller structures rather than one large building.
- Use simple building forms and materials for these structures.

*Finally, design standards that address more detailed issues follows:*

Doors and Windows

Policy:

Vertically-oriented windows are the predominant window type both in historic and new buildings. These provide a unifying element throughout the area. Their use should be continued in new construction, even for buildings now used for commercial retail purposes.



Use secondary structures in new development.

## #7. SOUTH MAIN STREET



Building entrances that are dramatically separated from the sidewalk are inappropriate.

Design Standards:

**249. Use windows similar in size and proportion to those used historically.**

- Large display windows are inappropriate along this area of Main Street. The character should be that of residential-type structures that are used for commercial purposes.
- Large display windows are also inappropriate along alleys.

**P 250. Use proportions of glass to solid wall that are similar to those found historically on residential-type buildings.**

- Fronts that face Main Street should maintain a balance between display windows and solid wall material similar to that of residential structures.
- For double-front buildings that also open onto the Blue River alley, small areas of glass in keeping with the historic alley character may be considered.

Policy:

Primary building entrances should face the street.

Design Standards:

**251. Orient the primary entrance to face Main Street.**

- Provide one primary entrance per building.
- Secondary business entrances may also be located along the rear façades of buildings. This is expected to be especially relevant for buildings that back onto the alley along the Blue River.

**252. Primary entrances should be at sidewalk level.**

- Entrances significantly lower or higher than the public sidewalk along Main Street will not be allowed.

## Ornament and Detail

### Policy:

Traditionally, ornamentation was used sparingly on buildings in the area. Most details were wooden elements, typically small in scale, and in proportion to the buildings themselves. Simple moldings were used around windows. Decorative shingles were used at times in the gables of dormers, and decorative brackets were applied to porch columns. Many decorative features were modest elaborations of functional elements. Today, when decorative features are used in new construction, they should be applied in a similar spirit.

### Design Standard:

**253. Use ornament and detail with restraint, in keeping with the modest character of the area.**

- Typical locations to consider for ornamentation are around doors and windows and eave lines.

## Plant Materials

### Policy:

In general, landscaping that suggests the character of residential yards found historically in this area should be encouraged.

### Design Standard:

**254. Use “residential” plantings for landscaping.**

- Specimen trees located within open areas in yards are encouraged.
- Plant beds located along fences, property lines and building foundations are appropriate.
- Plantings in rear yards on the west side of Main should be designed to allow visibility between yards and the river walk.



Historically, ornamental features were simple and served to highlight gables, bay windows, porches and doors.

## #7. SOUTH MAIN STREET

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Policy:

Installation of street trees that will help to create a sense of entry into the core area should be encouraged.

Design Standard:

**255. Reinforce the alignment of street trees wherever feasible.**

- Street tree species are specified in the urban design plan.