

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE HISTORIC DISTRICT CHARACTER AREA #3: South End Residential



BRECKENRIDGE, COLORADO

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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.

#3. South End Residential Character Area

Note: The special design standards presented here for the South End 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

The South End Residential Character Area is bounded on the east by the rear property line of lots on the east side of Ridge Street, running south of Lincoln at its northernmost edge, to south of Jefferson Avenue at its southernmost edge. The northern boundary runs east-west across Ridge Street south of the Exchange Building. The western boundary is defined by the rear property line of lots on the west side of Ridge Street, south of Lincoln, continuing south to Adams Avenue.

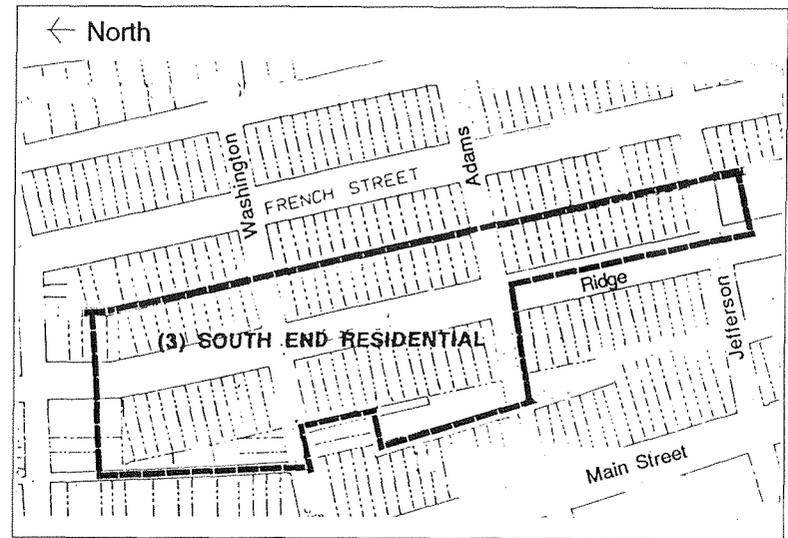
Character of historic development

The area now designated as the South End developed slightly later than other neighborhoods, and conveyed a low density residential character in its early years. Its initial construction period generally spanned the years 1892 to 1915. Houses were typically 1 to 1-1/2 stories, with some 2-story exceptions.

Historic photos show the area as sparsely developed. Developed lots typically retained extensive yards. Historically, the landscaping was limited. Some flower beds were installed in front yards, as accents, but most areas remained simple, with native grasses. Evergreen trees were often planted, and cottonwood trees were installed along the street edge in some blocks.

Residences were usually painted, clapboard-sided frame structures, although some log buildings were seen. Most houses had gabled roofs, while outbuildings often had shed roofs and were simpler in finish.

Visible from the character area to the south, stood a large industrial machine complex. The mill included several sloping, metal roofed structures and related industrial-type buildings. The industrial complex was an abrupt change in scale and materials. It is possible the South End



The South End Residential Character Area Boundary.

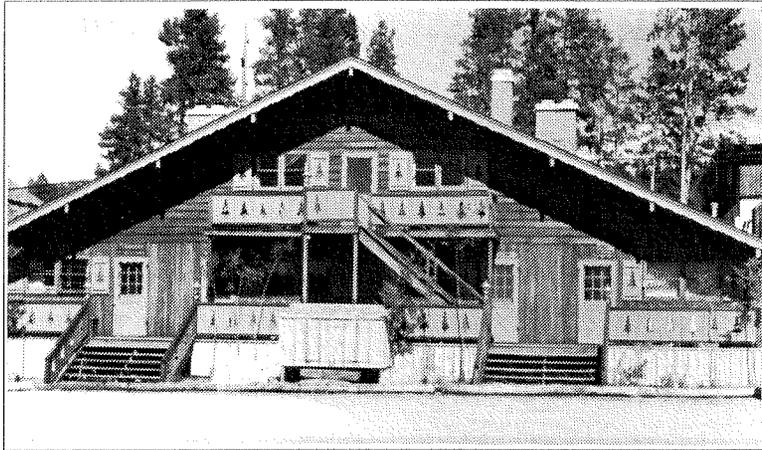


Historic structures feature vertically proportioned windows.

#3 South End Residential



Today, the South End contains a mix of uses in a comparatively high density.



Exotic styles and building forms, such as "chalet" type designs, are inappropriate in the historic district.

was a less desirable residential area in the early days of Breckenridge, due to its proximity to the industrial machine complex.

Existing character

Today, the area contains a mix of uses and is developing at a comparatively high density.

Landscape and site design

Large evergreen and deciduous trees survive in many front and side yards. The mature plantings help to establish a distinct visual continuity in the area. Their large scale is especially effective in masking the newer, larger-scale buildings when viewed from a distance. Most yard edges stop abruptly at sidewalks, without hedges of planting beds. A few site boundaries are exceptions to this rule. In these cases the property edges are defined by fences and rock walls.

Building form and materials

Today, the South End contains a mixture of older wooden residences, newer wood-clad housing, and some brick commercial buildings. A cluster of large frame structures located at the northeast corner of Adams and Ridge Streets is an example of new residential type buildings found in the area.

Building features

Historic buildings feature vertically proportioned, double-hung windows typical of the entire historic district. Entrances are also defined by porches, similar to those found throughout other parts of the historic district. Some contemporary buildings are also found in this area, many of which (unfortunately) differ significantly from the area's historic character. Examples are early resort-era buildings, which often exhibit "chalet" type details, jig-saw trim along roof eaves and decorative balcony and stair railings. These are considered inappropriate today for this historic context. A variety of later residential type buildings are also found, including finished log houses and "Colorado Mountain" cabins with stained, rough-sawn siding.

Historic preservation issues

Most of the historic structures that survive in the South End are well preserved, although some have experienced minor alterations. New siding that covers original clapboards and aluminum storm windows that obscure historic sash are examples of inappropriate alterations. These changes diminish the integrity of the historic buildings found here.

The most significant change in the character of the area is the current dominance of the automobile. Parked cars line the edges of streets and are often found in front yards. As a result, it is difficult to perceive the traditional relationship of building setbacks and front yards. The character of the pedestrian experience in the area has also been altered. Where once they walked along the edge of yards and fences, people must now traverse between parked cars and auto travel lanes.

Design goal for the South End Residential Character Area

The goal for this area is to reinforce the historic residential character, including its sense of open space and pedestrian-interesting features. To do so, existing buildings and sites should retain their historic residential character, even when converting to commercial use. New construction should also reflect the historic residential scale and character. Development should be in balance with the densities allowed.

Conceptual standards for the South End Character Area follow:

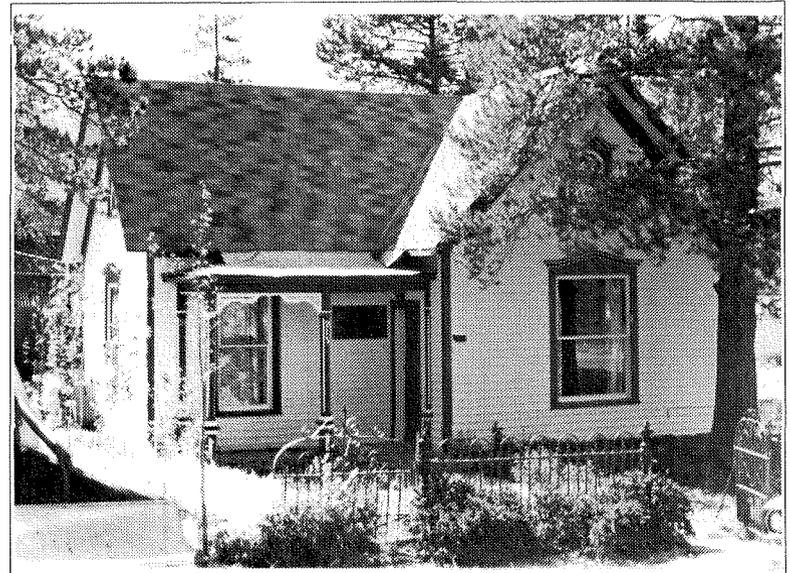
Building Setbacks

Policy:

Front and side yards were an inherent characteristic of the area, and the expression of a yard image should be continued. Because a variety of building setbacks were seen historically, new building setbacks may vary in the South End Residential Character Area.



Many historic structures in the South End have been well preserved. Some have been adapted to commercial uses while retaining their residential character.



The established image of residential "yards" should be maintained.



Hard surface plazas and decks alter the typical yard character and are discouraged.



The visual impact of cars should be minimized, as much as possible.

P

Design Standard:

155. Maintain the image of “yards” for front and side lot setbacks visible from the street.

- This is a very important standard that must be met.
- Front yards should be designed predominantly with plant materials, including trees and grass, as opposed to hard surfaced paving.
- Locating a commercial building at the sidewalk line is inappropriate in this context.
- Hard surface plazas and decks in front of buildings in such areas are generally inappropriate and are discouraged. However, they may be considered where sufficient plant materials establish clear edges to the yard area and the hard surfaced area appears subordinate to the yard.

Parking

Policy:

Automobile parking is a new use introduced in Breckenridge after the initial periods of historic development. Most automobiles were probably parked in older barns or along the street. A relatively small number of cars are seen in early photographs and they did not have a significant visual impact upon the area. This changed with the advent of the ski area and the new development surge of the 1970s and 1980s. Today, cars significantly alter the visual setting. As much as is possible, the visual impact of cars in the South End should be minimized, particularly with respect to parking provided on individual building lots. It is difficult to provide parking in this area in a manner compatible with the historic image. Individual creative design solutions for parking will be carefully reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Many sites have off-street parking lots located along the street edge, with parking perpendicular to the street. This arrangement has effectively widened the street and reduced the area perceived to be allocated to front yards. This parking arrangement deviates significantly from the historic development pattern and should be avoided. Wherever feasible, front yards should retain a rustic, lawn-like image. The front edge of the yard should be clearly defined.

Design Standard:

156. Minimize the visual impact of parking as seen from the street.

- Avoid locating parking in front yards. Locate parking in rear yards where feasible.
- If parking must be sited in the front, use paving designs that will help to retain a yard character and visually separate parking from the street edge.
- Avoid placing garage structures in front of primary houses. Attaching garages to the front of buildings is strongly discouraged. Garages built as smaller, separate structures are preferred. These should be sited to the side or to the rear of the main building.

Design Standard:

157. Develop parking such that the front edge of the site is retained as yard.

Building Scale

Policy:

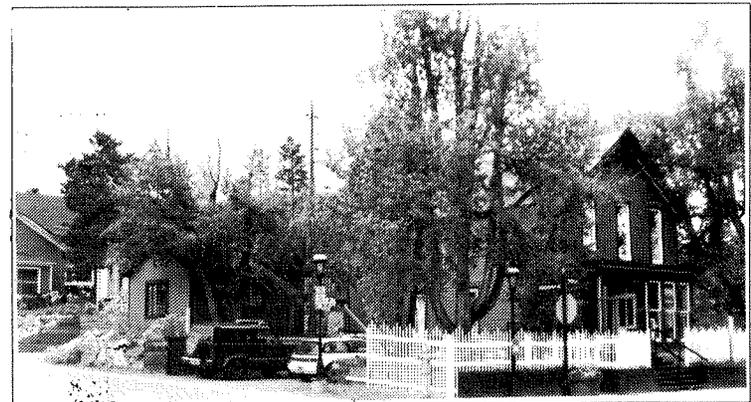
The historic building scale should be respected. Typically, historic buildings of between 540 and 2,600 square feet survive today. The average size of representative historic structures surviving today is 1,300 square feet.

Design Standards:

P 158. New buildings should be in scale with existing historic and supporting buildings in the South End Residential Character Area.

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

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



New buildings should appear to be in scale with existing historic and supporting buildings in close proximity to the site. Use of secondary structures helps to reduce the overall mass of buildings.

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 development.

- 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.

159. Divide site functions into separate structures to reduce the mass of individual buildings.

- Providing a garage separated 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:

In terms of building form and materials, the South End Residential Character Area historically featured sloped roofs and wood frame dwellings. Simple rectangular shapes were typical, with subordinate gable and shed roofed wings attached to a central volume. This “incremental” add-on nature helped maintain a sense of small-scaled houses.

Building designs that convey a larger scale and more complex building form than found historically should be avoided. Some recent buildings deviate from these historic precedents: Larger, multi-unit structures, which generally date from the 1960s and 1970s are examples. Recently constructed residences are as tall as 2-1/2 stories. Some have garages



Buildings similar in form to this building at Ridge and Washington are appropriate.



This new structure uses building and roof forms that are similar to those found historically.

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Use dormers for second floors in order to reduce the height of buildings to 1-1/2 stories.

integrated into the structure, which face directly onto the street, instead of onto an alley. These usually result in massive buildings out of scale with their historic neighbors. New roof dimensions are often larger than those found historically as well. All of these elements combine to create larger, more complex building forms than found traditionally. Such designs diminish the perception of the historic forms and shapes of the area and should be avoided.

Design Standards:

P

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

- Use simple building forms.
- Keep components of individual building elements in scale with those found historically.

P

161. Use roof forms that reflect the angles, scale, and proportions of those of historic buildings in the South End Character Area.

- The shape of the roof has a large impact on the character of a structure.
- Roof styles which were popular in the 19th century and are still in use today, such as high gable, high hip, shed and gambrel, are appropriate.
- Gable roofs should have a slope similar to those used historically.
- Note that many gable roofs were accented with dormers, but the dormers were used in limited numbers on individual buildings.

162. Front and side yard porches are encouraged.

- Porches were typically one story only.
- Most porches projected forward from the main structure and were sheltered by separate roofs.
- On new buildings, porches that appear to be attached forms subordinate to the main structure are preferred.

Building Height

Policy:

Similarity in building heights is desired to help establish a sense of visual continuity and to respect the character established by the small sizes of original buildings. Building heights for new structures should be perceived to be similar in scale to those found during the historic period of significance.

Design Standard:

P 163. Building height should be similar to nearby historic buildings.

- Primary facades should be 1 or 1-1/2 stories tall.
- Refer to height limits in ordinance. (Note that the height limits are absolute maximums and do not imply that all buildings should reach these limits. In some blocks, lower buildings will be more compatible with the context.)

Façade Widths

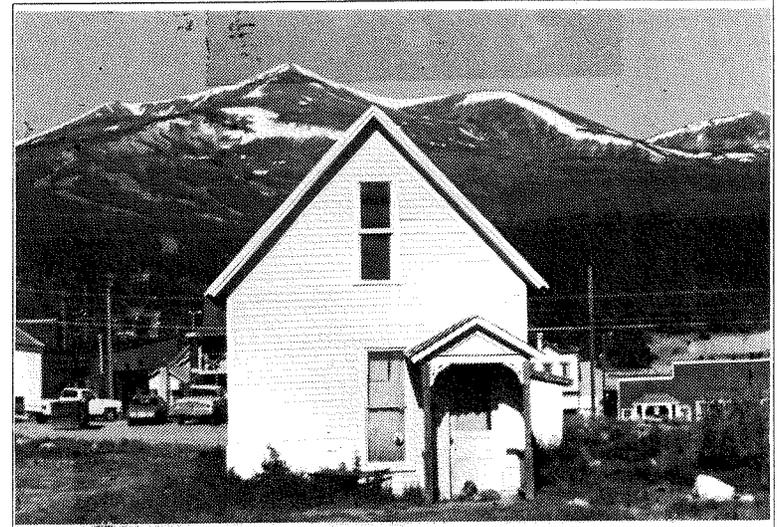
Policy:

New buildings should have primary façades similar in dimension to those found historically. Typical building widths of surviving historic buildings range between 16 and 44 feet; the average is 31 feet.

Design Standard:

P 164. Reinforce typical narrow front façade 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 façade of a building may not exceed 30 feet in width.



This is the scale of an historic building in this character area. Any new development in the vicinity should respect this height.

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. Although a few historic log buildings serve as accents to the lap siding standard, this uniformity of materials should be respected.

Design Standard:

P 165. 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 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.
- Modular panel materials are inappropriate.
- Masonry (brick or stone) only may 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 historic 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:

P 166. Use roofing materials 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

Policy:

Smaller outbuildings, usually located to the rear of the main house, 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.

Barns, storage sheds, and outhouses are typical building types that are 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 us to interpret Breckenridge's earlier days. These should be preserved. The tradition of developing a site with a complex of buildings should be continued in new construction.

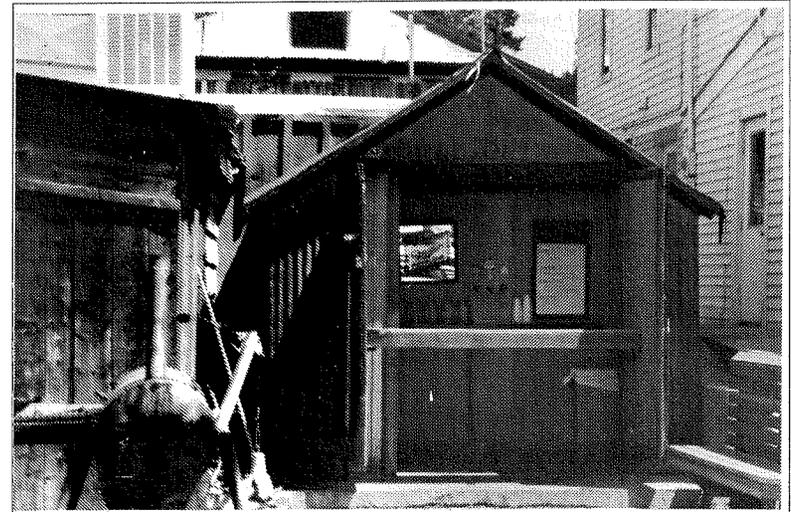
Design Standard:

167. Use secondary structures in new development when feasible.

- Housing utilitarian functions, such as parking, storage, and waste receptacles in secondary structures is encouraged.
- Using secondary structures for utilitarian functions (not living area) 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.



Use roofing materials similar to those found historically. Rolled metal roofs such as this may be considered.



Use secondary structures in new development where feasible.

Finally, design standards that address more detailed issues follow:



Use doors that are similar in scale and proportion to those found traditionally.

Doors and Windows

Policy:

Vertically-oriented windows are the primary window type, both in historic and new buildings. Doors were traditionally wood, often with simple decorative panels; upper panels included glass. These features, when repeated along the street provide a unifying element throughout the area. Their use should be continued in new construction.

Design Standard:

168. Use building features similar in size and shape to those used traditionally.

- Windows should be similar in size and shape to those used historically.
- Doors that include glass are encouraged.

Porches

Policy:

Throughout the area, primary building entrances are defined by porches, which usually face the street. The use of porches to define primary entrances should be continued.

Design Standard:

169. Use porches to define primary entrances to buildings.

- Roofs over porches are usually arranged in one of two ways: Where the ridge line of the main roof is perpendicular to the street, the porch appears as a subordinate attachment to the end elevation.
- Where the ridge line of the main roof is parallel to the street, the porch usually appears to be a more integral element to the building. Both options may be considered.

Ornament and Detail

Policy:

Traditionally, ornamental details were used sparingly on buildings in the South End Residential Character Area. Most were wooden elements and were typically small in scale, 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. When decorative features are used in new construction, they should be applied in a similar spirit.

Design Standard:

170. Use ornament and detail with restraint, in keeping with the modest character of the South End Residential Character Area.

- Avoid elaborately ornate details that would confuse the genuine history of the area.

Plant Materials

Policy:

Large evergreens are randomly scattered throughout the area and provide a sense of visual continuity to this part of the district. They also provide shade and visual relief to many of the simpler houses. The contrast in scale of these large trees to the small historic residential structures is especially noteworthy. Mature plantings help unify the area and should be continued.

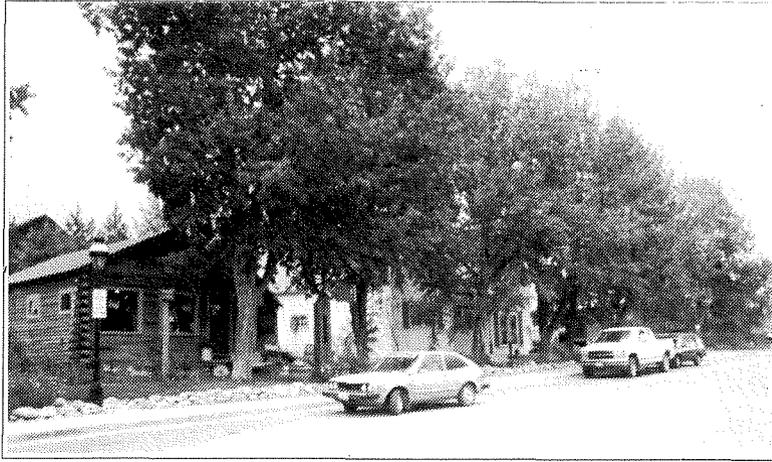
Design Standard:

171. Use evergreen trees in front yards where feasible.

- When initially installing trees, begin with a tree, or cluster of trees, that is large enough in scale to have an immediate visual impact.



Use porches to define primary entrances and use ornament with restraint.



Reinforce the alignment of street trees.

Policy:

Trees help give a block a uniform character. Cottonwood trees were originally planted along the street edges. Trees were uniformly aligned along the block and established a strong edge to the street. Although few survive, their reintroduction should be encouraged. This would be particularly helpful in promoting a uniform character in blocks where newer construction has deviated from historic building conditions.

Design Standard:

172. Reinforce the alignment of street trees wherever feasible.

- Planting new cottonwood trees to define the street edge is encouraged.

Policy:

Plant materials should be used to mitigate negative visual impacts of existing structures that are out of scale. Plantings should also be used to minimize the visual impact of new service areas abutting adjacent properties and public ways.

Design Standard:

173. Use landscaping to mitigate undesirable visual impacts.

- Use large trees to reduce the perceived scale where larger building masses would abruptly contrast with the historic scale of the area.
- Include hedges and other masses of lower-scale plantings to screen service areas.