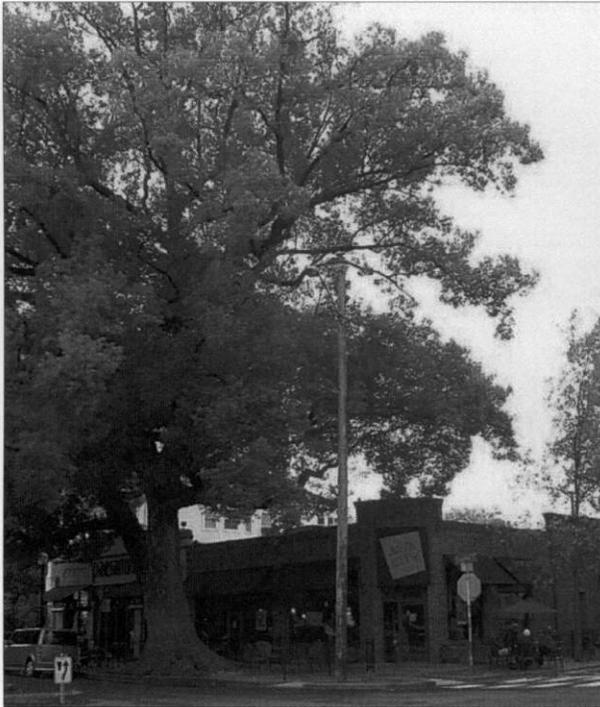


Chapter 9

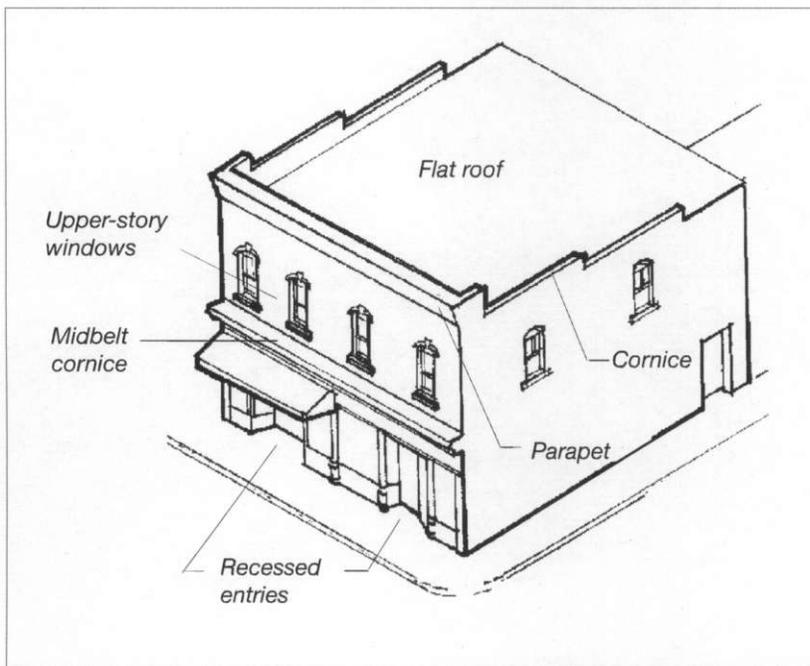
Historic Neighborhood Commercial Buildings

While this document focuses on residential structures, these standards also apply to commercial properties, especially those found within residential historic districts. The principles of preserving key features, of respecting the historic character and adapting to new needs are similar. Therefore, the general standards for treatment of historic properties presented in the preceding chapters apply to such situations. In addition, this chapter provides more specific guidance about the application of the preservation standards to commercial properties.



Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features of historic properties collectively establish a sense of place, provide human scale and add rich detail to the street and should be preserved. Typical exterior features of pre-WWII commercial buildings include: original wall materials, decorative cornices, vertically-oriented upper-story windows, larger first-floor openings and trim around openings.



The renovation of early commercial structure should maintain the character-defining elements of the building type.

9.1 For a commercial storefront building, a rehabilitation project may include the preservation of these character-defining elements:

- **Display windows:** The main portion of glass on the storefront, where goods and services are displayed, and the original framing and trim elements.

- **Transom:** The upper portion of the storefront, separated from the main display window by a frame.

- **Kickplate:** Found beneath the display window. Sometimes called a bulkhead panel. There may also be a continuous base of a more durable material, such as stone around the exterior of the building.

- **Entry:** Usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.
- **Upper-story windows:** Windows located above the street level. These usually have a vertical orientation, and appear to be less transparent than the large expanse of glass in the storefront below.
- **Cornice molding:** A decorative projecting band at the top of the building. A **midbelt cornice** may sometimes be found separating some floors.

Corner Stores

Commercial structures should reflect their traditional role within the neighborhood.

Corner stores were a strong part of many residential neighborhoods. They provided goods and services and local gathering spots all within walking distance for area residents. The original character of these buildings should be retained, even if the original use is no longer viable.

Along these lines, where new corner commercial buildings are anticipated in predominantly residential neighborhoods they should be designed to relate to the smaller scale and simpler detailing that the traditional corner stores exhibited.

9.2 Maintain the appearance of historic commercial corner stores.

- Every reasonable effort should be made to provide a compatible use for the building that requires minimal alterations.

9.3 A new commercial building should reflect the traditional corner store arrangement of the neighborhood.

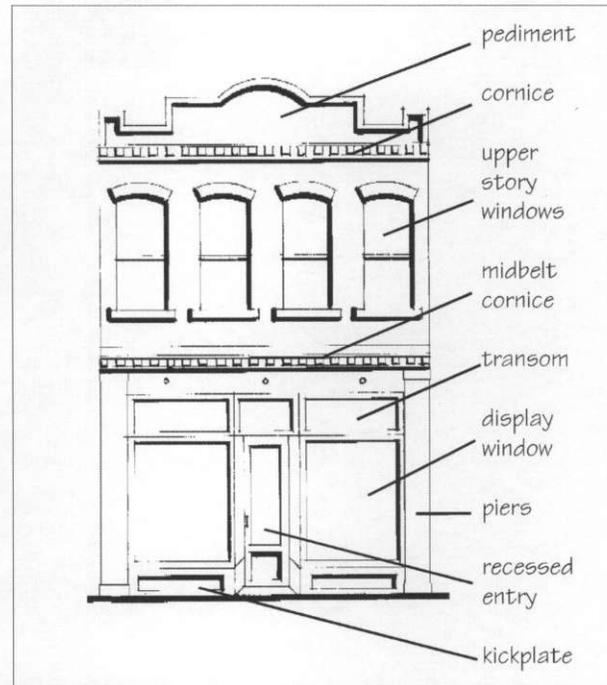
- Locate a new commercial building at the front of a property.
- Locate parking to the rear of a site. Other than on street, parking in front is not appropriate.

9.4 Maintain or use traditional storefront elements.

- Use elements such as display windows, recessed entries, parapets, kickplates and transoms, in appropriate proportions, placement, materials and finish.

9.5 Materials should be applied in a manner similar to those seen traditionally.

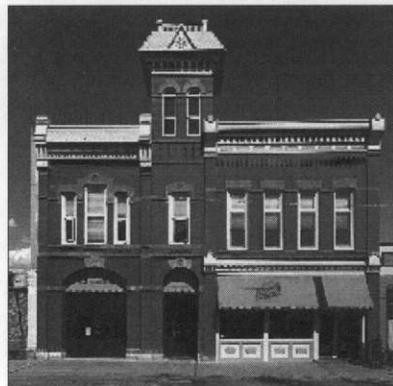
- Appropriate materials for pre-WWII commercial structures include wood, brick, stone, concrete and tile. In Sacramento smooth finish plaster stucco was also used in the first half of the 20th century.



Typical commercial components.



Corner stores are strong components of many historic residential neighborhoods.



This storefront facade (bottom image) was restored to its original character with the help of historic photographs (middle image) after being altered over time (top image). The rehabilitation preserved surviving details and reconstructed missing ones.

Storefronts

Storefronts often include a repetition of the standard commercial building elements creating a visual unity on the street.

Although these elements are common among buildings, many of the design elements or materials relate to the period of construction and style of architecture of the building and differ from one building to the next. Preserve significant storefront elements that are defining of their architectural style or period of construction.

However, on some buildings the specific design of individual storefront elements was not integral to the architectural style of the building. For example, in some styles, the position of the entryway is important to the design of the building, whereas in others it is not and its location moved around due to function. When this is the case, and a feature (e.g., the location of the door) is not integral to the style of the building, the entryway may be moved.

Preserving significant historic storefronts or restoring an altered or missing storefront element are important preservation goals.

9.6 Preserve the historic storefront when it is intact.

- This will help maintain the interest of the street to pedestrians, in addition to preserving the integrity of the historic structure.



Where original details are missing, an alternative design that is a contemporary interpretation of a traditional storefront, as this one is, may be considered. The storefront still should be designed to provide interest to pedestrians.

9.7 If a storefront is altered, restore it to the original design.

- If evidence of the original design is missing, use a simplified interpretation of similar storefronts. The storefront still should be designed to provide interest to pedestrians.

9.8 An alternative design that is a contemporary interpretation of a traditional storefront is appropriate, if the original design is unknown.

- Where the original is missing and no evidence of its character exists, a new design that uses the traditional elements may be considered.
- However, the new design must continue to convey the characteristics of typical storefronts, including the transparent character of the display windows, recessed entries and cornices, to name a few.
- Altering the size of a historic window opening or blocking it with opaque materials is not appropriate. Retain the size and dimensions of historic window openings. Retain glazing and transparency where they were found historically.
- Note that in some cases an original storefront may have been altered early in the history of the building and the alterations have taken on significance. Such changes should be preserved.

Windows and Doors

Original windows and doors are important features that help convey the early character of a building.

9.9 Maintain a historically significant storefront opening.

- The size and shape of the storefront are important characteristics that contribute to the integrity of a historic commercial building. Retain the shapes and sizes of these features.
- If these elements have already been altered, restore the original opening, if that can be determined.

9.10 Retain the original shape of the transom and glazing in a historic storefront.

- The upper glass band of a traditional storefront introduced light into the depths of a building. These bands are found on many historic storefronts, and they often align at the same height. The shape of the transom is important to the proportion of the storefront, and it shall be preserved in its historic configuration.
- If the original glass is missing, install new glass. However, if it is determined the transom must be blocked, use it as a sign panel or a decorative band, but be certain to retain the original proportions, depth, exterior framing and trim. If possible, retain the glass as well and block behind it so that the block could be removed in the future and resume its original function as a transom window.

9.11 Preserve historic upper-story windows.

- Historically, upper-story windows had a vertical emphasis. The proportions of these windows contribute to the character of each commercial storefront. The opening size, proportions and placements shall be preserved.
- When projects propose alterations to an area of the building where windows are currently blocked consider reopening the windows as part of the project.
- Maintain the historic sash as well. Repair sash, rather than replace it, when feasible.
- Many small commercial buildings in Sacramento have bay window projections on the second floor which shall be retained. (See corner market on 9-3)

Entries

The repetition of recessed entries provides a rhythm of shadows along the street that helps establish a sense of scale and identifies business entrances. This pattern should be maintained.

9.12 Maintain recessed entries where they are found.

- Restore the historic recessed entry if it has been altered.
- Avoid positioning an entry flush with the sidewalk.

9.13 Where an entry is not recessed, maintain it in its original position, when feasible.

- However, it may be necessary to comply with other code requirements, including door width, swing and construction. If so, an alteration may be considered.
- In some cases, entries must comply with accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Note, however, that some flexibility in application of these regulations is provided for historic properties.

Kickplates

A kickplate, or bulkhead, was a popular feature of most commercial buildings. This feature should be preserved.

9.14 Retain an original kickplate as a decorative panel.

- The kickplate, located below the display window, adds interesting detail to the streetscape and should be preserved.

9.15 If the original kickplate is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design.

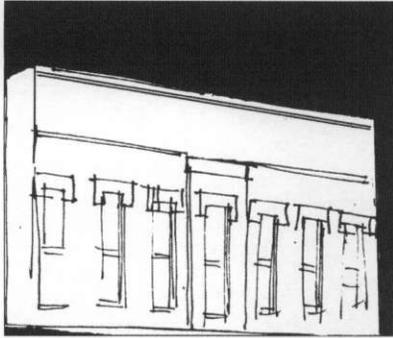
- Wood, metal and masonry are appropriate materials for replacements.
- Coordinate the color of the kickplate with other trim elements on the building.



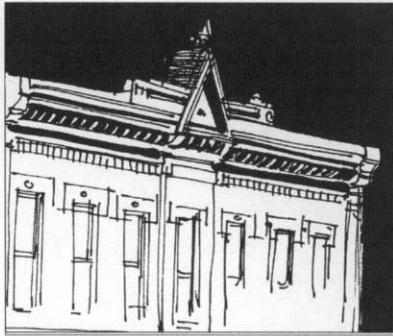
Maintain recessed entries where they are found.



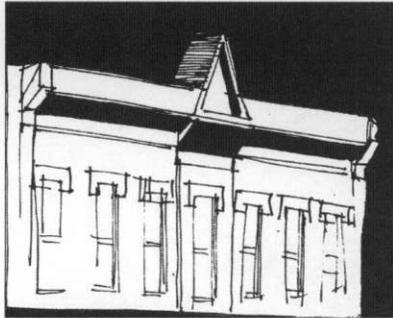
If the original kickplate is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design. Here a transparent glass kickplate is used where a solid panel may have existed. However, the original proportions are still conveyed, which is appropriate.



If the cornice is missing from a building, consider reconstructing it. (See below.)



Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.



A simplified interpretation also is appropriate if documentation of the original design is missing.

Cornices

Most historic commercial buildings have cornices to cap their facades. Their repetition and general alignment along a street contribute to the visual continuity on a block and should be preserved.

9.16 Preserve the character of the cornice line of a historic building.

- This may be a straight or stepped parapet.

9.17 Reconstruct a missing cornice, when historic evidence is available.

- Use early photographs to determine design details of an original cornice.
- The substitution of another old cornice for the original may be considered, provided that the substitute is similar in appearance to the original.

9.18 A simplified interpretation also is appropriate if evidence of the original is missing.

- Appropriate materials include stone, brick and stamped metal. Concrete and resin cast products may also be used.

Facade Materials

Original exterior building materials provide a sense of scale and texture and often convey the work of skilled craftsmen. These original building materials should not be covered, damaged or removed.

9.19 Historic building materials and craftsmanship add textural qualities, as well as visual continuity and character to the streetscape, and should be preserved.

- Brick and stone are the dominant building materials and their character and finish should be preserved.

9.20 Protect historic material surfaces.

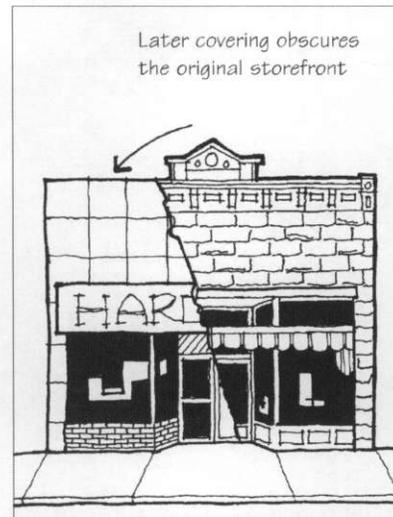
- Don't use harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, that could damage the finish of historic materials.
- If chemical cleaners are used, a test patch should be reviewed.

9.21 Protect masonry from water deterioration.

- Provide proper drainage so water does not stand on flat surfaces or accumulate in decorative features.
- Provide a means to drain water away from foundations to minimize rising damp. Do not permit downspouts to direct water to the foundation.
- DO NOT use a sealant, or clear coat, to protect masonry. A sealant will prevent proper breathing and cause moisture to be trapped inside the masonry.
- However, if masonry was painted historically, then it may be appropriate to repaint.

9.22 Don't cover or obscure original facade materials.

- Covering original facades not only conceals interesting detail, but also interrupts the visual continuity along the street.
- Expose original material if it has been covered.



Don't cover or obscure original facade materials.



Expose original material if it has been covered.



Protect masonry from water deterioration.



New addition with minimal impact to historic structure.

9.23 If material replacement is necessary, use materials similar to those employed historically.

- Brick and stone were the primary wall materials for most buildings. Wood and metal were used for window, door and storefront surrounds.
- Substitute materials may be used if they match the original in appearance.

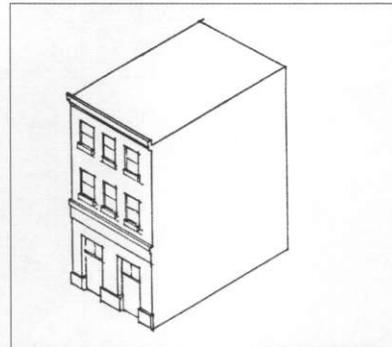
Design of Additions to Historic Commercial Buildings

Many buildings have experienced additions over time, as the need for more space occurred. An addition should be designed such that the historic character of the building can still be perceived. When planning a new addition to a historic structure, the negative effects that may occur should be minimized. While some destruction of original materials is almost always a part of constructing an addition, such loss should be minimized.

Two distinct types of additions should be considered. First, a ground-level addition that involves expanding the footprint of a structure may be considered. Such an addition should be to the rear or side of a building. This will have the least impact on the historic character of a building, but there may only be limited opportunities to do this.

Second, an addition to the roof may be designed that is simple in character and set back substantially from the front of a building. In addition, the materials, window sizes and alignment of trim elements on the addition should be compatible to those of the existing structure.

A third option, which only will be considered on a case-by-case basis, is to design an addition within the wall plane of the existing building. This option is the most difficult and requires the most care to respect the historic relationship of the building to the street. Such an addition should provide a visual distinction between the existing structure and its addition. This may be accomplished through the use of a midbelt cornice element or a subtle change in building materials.



An original three-story building, before an addition. (Compare with sketches below and on the following page.)

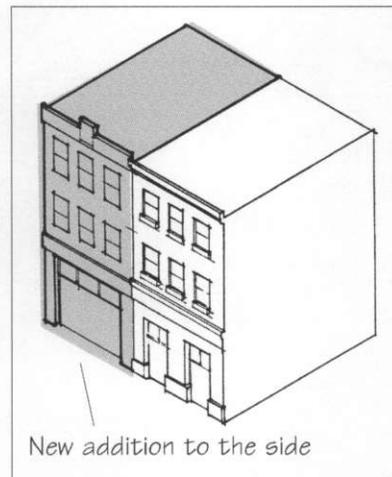
9.24 An addition should be compatible in scale, materials and character with the main building.

9.25 An addition should not damage or obscure historically or architecturally important features.

- For example, loss or alteration of a cornice line should be avoided.

9.26 Design an addition such that the historic character of the original building can still be interpreted.

- A new addition that creates an appearance inconsistent with the historic character of the building is inappropriate. For example, an addition that is more ornate than the original building would be out of character.
- An addition that seeks to imply an earlier period than that of the building also is inappropriate because it would confuse the history of the building.



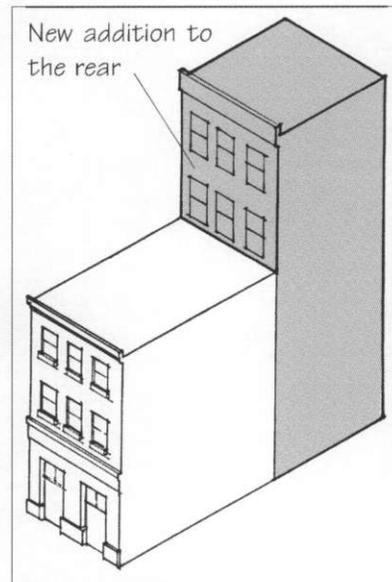
New addition to the side

9.27 An addition should be subtly distinguishable from the historic building.

- An addition should be made distinguishable from the historic building, even in subtle ways, so that the character of the original can be interpreted.

9.28 An addition may be made to the rear or side of a building if it does the following:

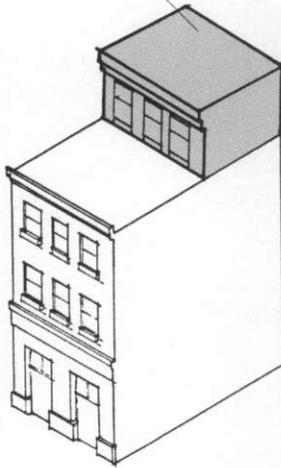
- An addition should maintain the alignment of storefront elements, moldings, cornices and upper-story windows that exist on the main part of the building and its surrounding context.



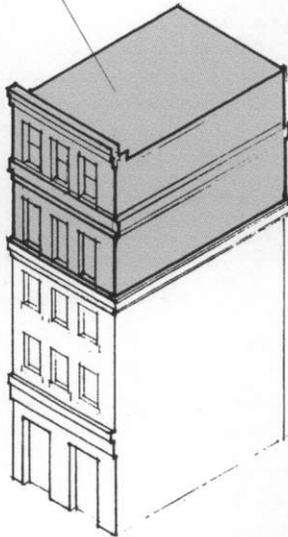
New addition to the rear

Appropriate alternative approaches to additions.

Roof addition set back from the front



Roof addition in the same plane as the original, but differentiated with details



Appropriate alternative approaches to additions. Not all architectural styles are compatible with this approach.

9.29 An addition may be made to the roof of a building if it does the following:

- An addition should be set back from the primary, character-defining facade, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building.
- Its design should be modest in character, so it will not attract attention from the historic facade.
- The addition should be distinguishable as new, albeit in a subtle way.

9.30 In limited circumstances, an addition may be made to the roof of a building and not be set back from character-defining facades, if it does the following:

- An addition should be distinguished from the existing building. A change in material or a decorative band can be considered to accomplish this.
- An addition should maintain the alignment of storefront elements, moldings, cornices and upper-story windows that exist on the main part of the building.
- The addition should also be compatible in scale, texture and materials with the original.



This new rooftop addition to a landmarked structure is modest in character and does not attract attention from the historic structure.

Chapter 10

Pilot Districts:

Boulevard Park Historic District

The Boulevard Historic District lies between 20th Street on the west and C Street on the north. The eastern boundary varies, running roughly along 23rd Street and then extending over for a portion as far as 25th Street. The southern boundary is an alley between I and J Streets. A key feature is the pair of landscaped medians that run along 21st and 22nd Streets. These were created when Union Park Race Track, which had been operated by the Sacramento Agricultural Association, and was the site of the State Fair, closed and was redeveloped, beginning in 1905. As a result, many of the structures in the area date from the early Twentieth Century. Some buildings, however, are older. These older houses, which often have details of Victorian styles, appear more frequently on some of the east-west streets that developed a bit earlier.

The landscaped medians themselves are special character-defining features of the district and their preservation is very important. The fact that these two boulevards align in a north-south orientation is also a distinctive feature, because more "major" streets in the area run east-west.

Another distinctive feature is a set of "commons," that is in the interior of three of the blocks in the district. These were originally places for shared stables and related service facilities. Today, they survive as shared open space. Houses that back onto these commons are visible from these open spaces, and this fact should be taken into consideration.

This is a large district, and most of its houses date from 1905 to 1915. Many exhibit the American Neoclassic four-square house shape with different stylistic details. Others are Craftsman bungalows. A few older houses, from the Victorian era, are found in the portion of the historic district outside the boundaries of the former racetrack. The scale of the houses is generally larger along the two boulevards.

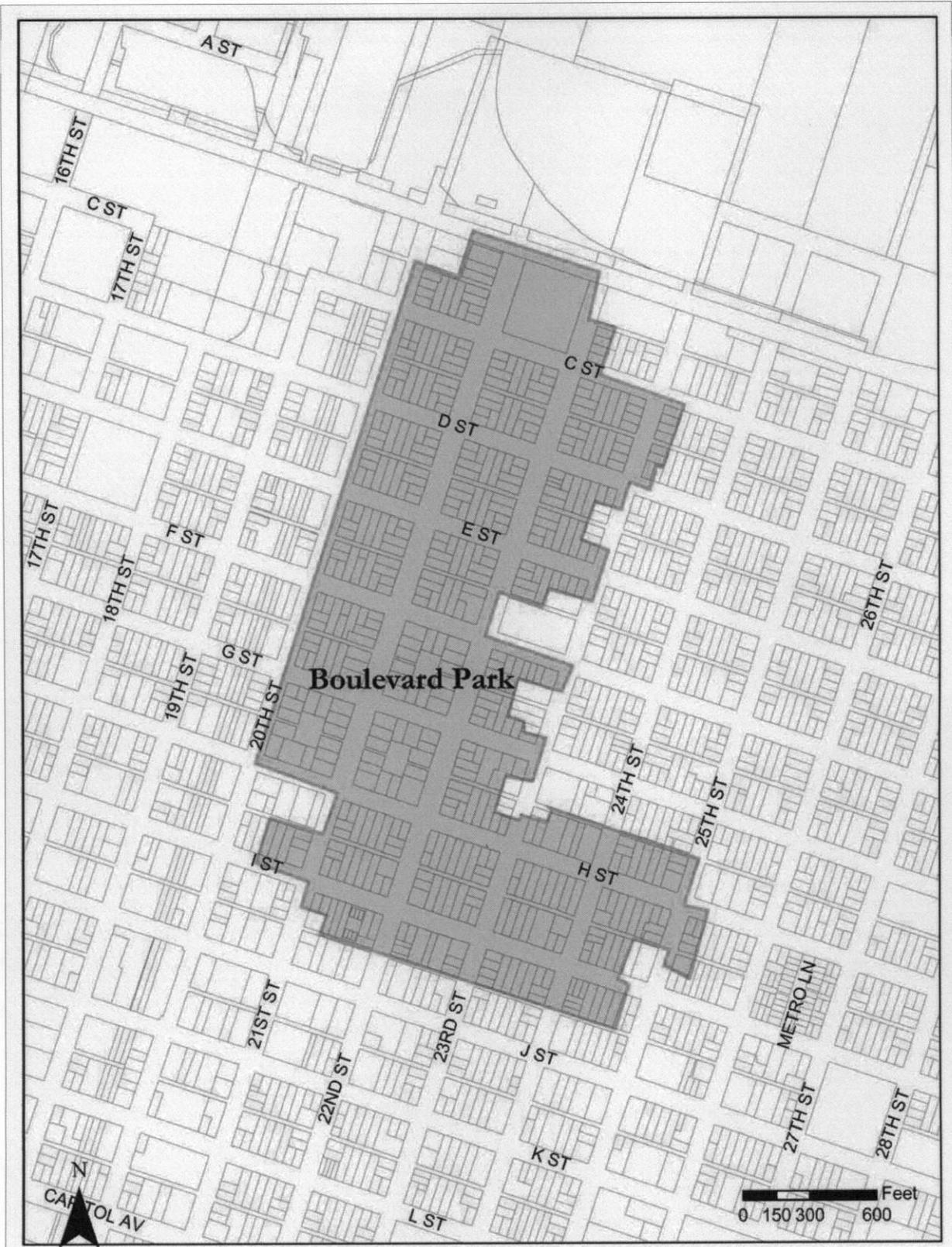


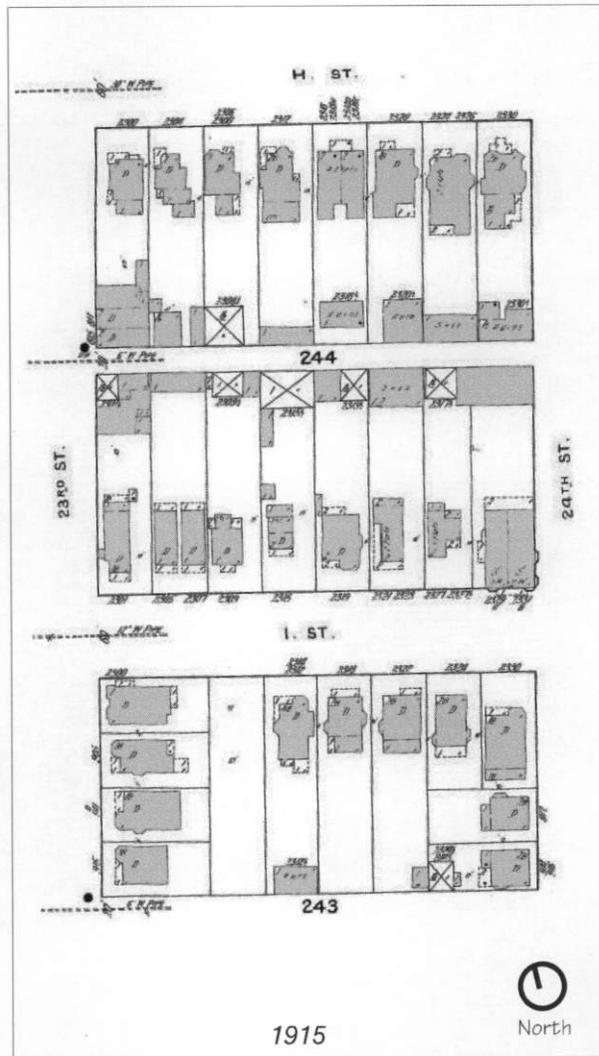
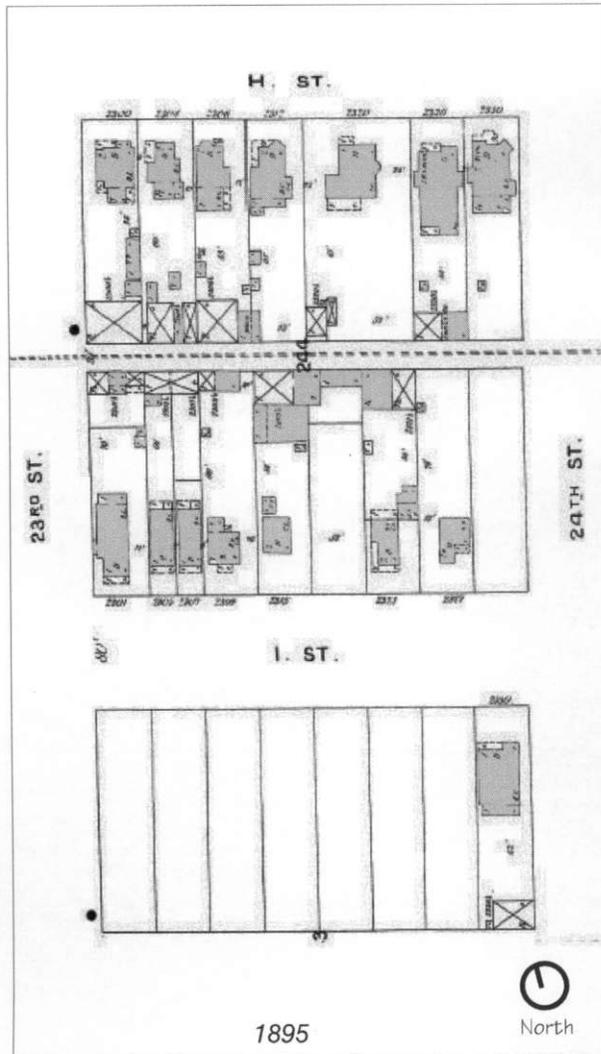
Some relatively large houses exist in the Boulevard Park Historic District, such as this full two-story Neoclassical house. These are typically raised a few feet above grade.



Landscaped medians on 21st and 22nd Streets give a distinct identity to this district. The preservation of the character of these medians is a high priority.







EVOLUTION AND CHANGE IN THE BOULEVARD PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

A comparison of two historic maps illustrates the basic framework of the Boulevard Park District and also its evolution. In the earlier map from 1895, one block is relatively mature in its development, whereas the other, on the south side of I Street is virtually undeveloped, with only one house being documented. (Note that the heart of this neighborhood at that time was a race track.) In block 244, lots face the lettered streets and secondary structures are served by an alley. The alley structures align uniformly.

Along the H Street face, there are seven lots. Each has one single family house. One lot, the third from the right, is a double-width.

The same set of blocks appears in the upper right image from 1915. The northern block, facing H Street, has increased in density: The larger central lot has been subdivided into two lots and, on one of them an apartment building with four flats has been added.

The original house has been shifted to make room for the apartments and it appears that a small wing has been removed. On the other side of block 244, another single family dwelling has appeared in the middle block and a corner store with apartments above has been constructed on the corner of I and 24th Streets. The block on the bottom, which also faces I Street, has filled in with eleven single family dwellings and one lot remains vacant. In each case, note that the four lots at the top, facing 23rd Street, were carved from two deeper lots that earlier had faced I Street. Throughout the area, building setbacks vary somewhat, but within a relatively narrow range.

This analysis reveals an important fact, that change has occurred in the past within this district. This suggests that, because change is a part of the area's heritage, it should be accommodated today, when it is conceived to be compatible with the historic character.



Many buildings in the Boulevard Park Historic District exhibit Craftsman stylistic details.



Windows and doors are trimmed with wood members that have substantial depth and project noticeable shadow lines, which help contribute to the sense of scale and visual interest of historic structures in the district.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF BOULEVARD PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

This section presents a description of key design features of the district that should be respected in rehabilitation, new construction and site improvements. These features should be taken into consideration when applying the design guidelines in this chapter as well as those from other chapters that apply.

One of the most distinctive features of this district are the two landscaped boulevards that form the central spine of the neighborhood. These are significant character-defining features of the district's historic streets and landscapes that should be preserved.

Other key features to respect:

SITE AND ORIENTATION

- Porches and front entrances face the street.
- Garages are located in the rear, and are served by alleys or commons.
- Garages in commons are one story behind two-story houses. This relationship should be maintained.
- A planting strip of lawn exists between the sidewalk and the street.
- The fronts of houses are generally set back twenty-five feet from the curb, although some variation exists.
- Side yards are typically five feet wide.
- Buildings and parcels align with the rectilinear street grid.
- Curb cuts and driveways on boulevard streets and lettered streets are very rare.
- There are few curb cuts along most blocks. Most parking occurs on street, or is accessed from alleys.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

- There are few fences in front yards, and when they do occur, they are low in height and very "transparent."
- A scored concrete walkway, three feet wide, is typical. Sometimes, however, there are curves or pebble textures.
- Large street trees arch over the street creating a multi level canopy. These include sycamores and elms.

BUILDING FORM & SCALE

- Many structures are one to two stories in height, while a few are a full three stories.
- Some appear relatively massive, especially between 20th to 23rd and F to H Streets, while later structures may be more modest in scale.
- Many two story structures are thirty feet in height to the ridge, allowing high interior ceilings.
- Neoclassical details occur frequently.
- Raised front porches are typical and face the street.
- Buildings built prior to 1905 are relatively narrow, with more vertical proportions. Many have details from Victorian-era styles.
- Buildings built after 1905 tend to be more block-like; some have neoclassical details. Others are row houses and craftsman bungalows
- A raised first floor is virtually universal.
- Side yards are relatively narrow, and buildings appear in close proximity to each other.
- Roof forms vary; from multi-gabled to hipped. None are flat or shed forms.
- Porches are universal, many with a distinct roof that projects from the primary building mass.
- A brick foundation is common with a wood sided building. In many cases, the siding material is different between the foundation and the first floor.



Commercial uses at corners have historic precedent in portions of the district.



Shaded front lawns with porches facing the street are key features that should be maintained.



Doors with trim of substantial depth are typical.



Street trees exist within a planting strip that is adjacent to the curb. This is a key feature of the district.



OTHER FEATURES

- Dormers and bay windows are prevalent. They visually break up the mass of a building and add visual interest.
- Raised front porches and steps are typical. These reflect the "high water" design techniques used in response to flooding.
- Large decorative windows, with substantial trim and details appear on many buildings.
- Neocolonial bungalows have distinctive front porches and stairwells.
- Victorian era buildings have compact bays, bracketed cornices and turned spindles.
- Craftsman Bungalows have wide overhangs with brackets and exposed rafter tails
- Full glass front doors are used on some structures.

DESIGN STANDARDS

The historic building fabric within the Boulevard Park District is relatively intact and few non-contributors exist here. The overall character is one of consistency, of buildings built to a similar scale and with a similar orientation to the street. For this reason, it is important that new construction blend carefully with the historic context. Infill designs should appear more similar in character and detail rather than strongly contrasting with their historic neighbors.

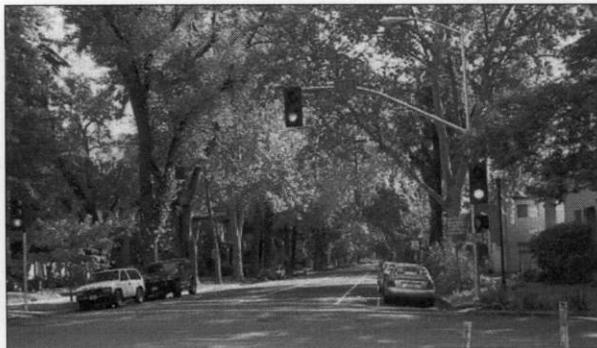
While there is a strong overall sense of unity in the district, diversity does exist, but at a more fine-grained scale of perception. Variations in styles, materials and forms do exist, but the greater variety is in architectural details. This tradition of providing variety in building details should be continued in new construction.

Other design standards for additions and infill new construction:

- Maintain the traditional scale relationship of lot to buildings and maintain appropriate front and side yard setbacks.
- New infill complement the existing character of the neighborhood or block.
- Providing units over garages in alleys is an appropriate means of accommodating additional residential units.



The rhythm of front porches evenly spaced along the street is a feature of the district that should be maintained.



The landscaped median and the canopy of street trees are key features that should be preserved.



Maintain the tree lawns that flank the medians.

- Use high quality design and materials for stairs and railings.
- For common blocks, providing units over garages shall incorporate an 8'-10' step back to preserve the character of the common blocks.

LANDSCAPES

The general landscape design standards are particularly important for the Boulevard Park Historic District. The following standards also apply:

Preserve the historic landscapes of the boulevards.

- New plantings within the boulevards should be in keeping with historic planting character, which includes turf and a centered row of palms.
- If original trees must be removed, they should be replaced in kind or with species with similar height and form.

Capitol Avenue Historic District

The design standards in this chapter apply specifically to the Capitol Avenue Historic District, in addition to the other relevant standards provided in other sections of the document. The Capitol Avenue Historic District focuses on 18th Street, from Q Street on the south to just north of Capitol Avenue. In reality, only a short portion of Capitol Avenue is within the district boundaries. The district name is somewhat of a misnomer, and while that is its official name, it may be best described as the "18th Street Historic District."

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF THE CAPITOL AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The district contains a mix of uses and building types and styles, including Italianate, Queen Anne and Neoclassic Boxes. These are other key features that should be respected:

SITE AND ORIENTATION

- Varying setbacks of ten to fifteen feet allow for green space in the front of structures. Further variation occurs between those with stairs extending to the sidewalk and others that are setback further.
- Open space is located to the rear of lots, with garages and utility structures aligned along the alleys.
- Stairs lead to the main floor, which is set over a "flood basement."
- Parcel widths also vary, which results in some variety in building front widths.

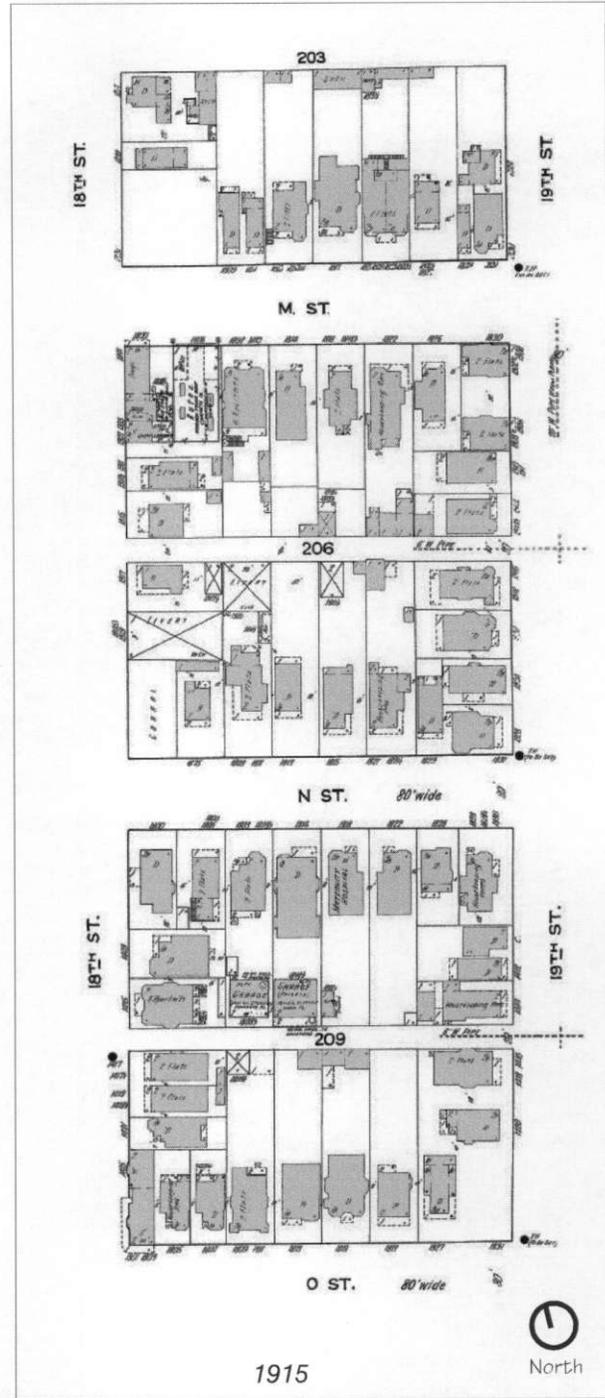
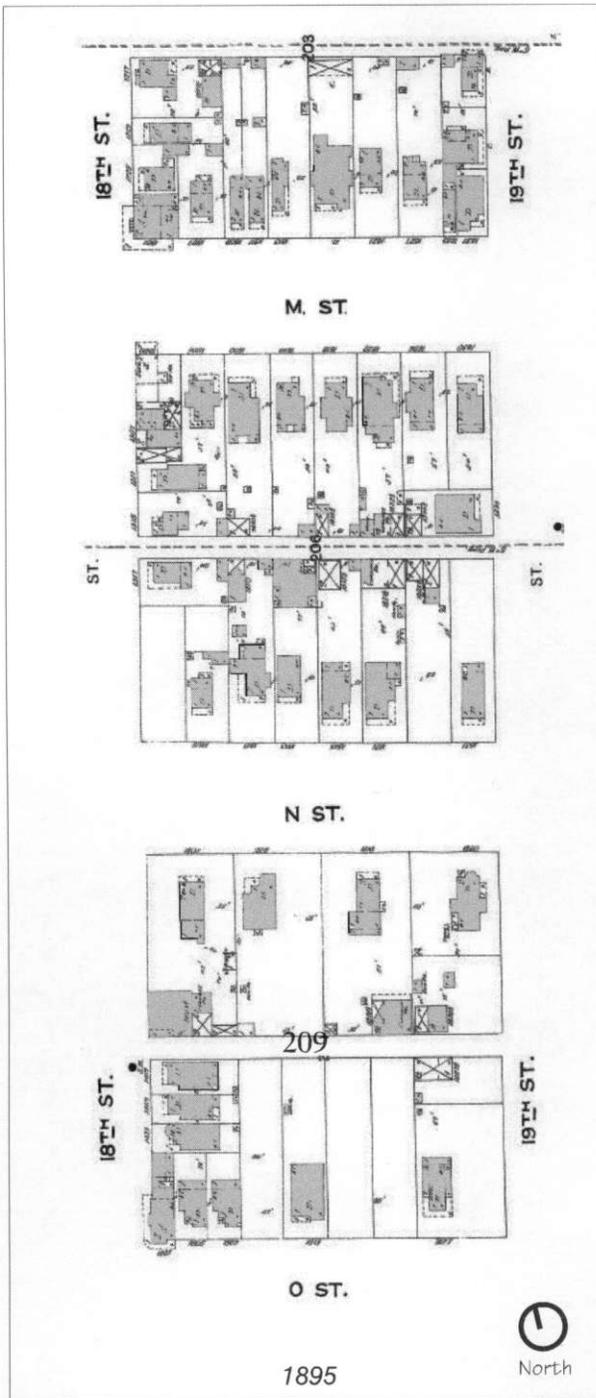


Raised cottages are a part of the character of the Capitol Avenue Historic District.



Palm trees contribute a particular texture and image that reflect an earlier era.





EVOLUTION AND CHANGE IN THE CAPITOL AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

In 1895, maps document emerging development patterns in the Capitol Avenue District. On Capitol Avenue itself (then M Street), single family dwellings are predominant. Setbacks vary on the north side of the street. Farther south (to the left), development is more sparse, especially in block #209. Compare with the same area, upper right image, in 1915. By then, the Capitol Avenue area had increased in density, especially along 18th Street. On Capitol, several

buildings are now shown as apartments, flats and rooming houses. An auto business has appeared at the corner of 18th and M. Block #209 has substantially increased in density, primarily with single family dwellings, but several duplex flats as well. Note that short lots facing the numbered streets have been created. These two maps reflect the evolving nature of the district's history and suggest that other compatible changes are also possible.



Low scale foundation planting is a part of the character of the district.



Windows have strong vertical proportions.



Porches are prominent in the Capitol Avenue Historic District.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

- A park strip lines street edges. Most are intact, with tall palms or large canopy trees.
- Palm trees contribute a particular texture and image that reflect an earlier era; elms and sycamores also are present, creating "cathedral height" canopy.
- Many lots have small front yards.
- Plantings are generally subordinate, and do not obscure character-defining features of historic structures.
- Foundation planting occurs in rounded forms, which includes camellias and azaleas.
- Low front fences exist; these are often wrought iron or white pickets.

BUILDING FORM & SCALE

- Some diversity in massing and building heights exists. This suggests that some variation in buildings heights for new construction may be in keeping with the historic character.
- Commercial structures are in scale with nearby residential units (generally the larger residential buildings), 2 to 2.5 stories.
- A mix of styles exists, including Delta Victorian, Victorian and Neoclassical. Many are "highwater basement" forms of these styles, which results in a taller building form.
- Many roofs are gabled or hipped with pediment and front gable
- Windows have strong vertical proportions.
- Porches are prominent and face the street.
- Horizontal trim elements establish distinct lines along a block. Moldings along porch eaves are noteworthy.
- Larger more significant structures exist at street corners, often with wrap around porches.