DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE HISTORIC DISTRICT
CHARACTER AREA #2:
North End Residential

BRECKENRIDGE, COLORADO
December 1991
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**NOTE:**
A 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.
#2. North End Residential Character Area

Note: The special design standards presented here for the "North 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 North End Residential Character Area is bounded by the alley between Ridge and Main Streets on the west, the back property lines of lots on the east side of French Street to the east, the property line of the county court house on the south, and French Street to the north. It also includes the Father Dyer church property.

Character of historic development
This area was a part of Breckenridge's early residential neighborhood. Significant development occurred in this portion of town between 1875 to 1898, with most of the construction appearing during the 1880s. Houses were small, one and one-and-a-half stories in height. The Brown Hotel, although an older building, is atypical and does not represent the character of historic residential scale. Most primary dwellings had gabled roofs, often punctured with small dormers.

Buildings in this area are representative of several development eras, including early Settlement and Camp Phase log cabins (such as the Carter Museum) and clapboard sided houses from the Town Phase.

Existing character
A significant number of historic structures survive, but newer commercial uses are intermingled amongst the older residential buildings. Some newer construction is particularly "modern" in character and varies in character from the historic context. New materials, among them stucco and brick, have been introduced in some of these buildings that diminish the continuity of the area. These materials should be avoided.
A ridge, from which Ridge Street derives its name, defines the western edge of this character area. The land drops to the west away from Ridge Street. Buildings appear smaller along Ridge Street, whereas their full height is seen from Main Street below. Many homes have been built along the edge of this ridge, with their rear facades rising up to four stories. Presently, many of these are visible from Main Street.

The angled street grid layout has influenced the character of this area also: Because Ridge and French Streets converge at the northern end of this area, the block north of Wellington between Ridge and French is only one lot deep. The result is that the primary structures in this block face onto Ridge, while the back sides of these buildings face onto French Street. This configuration gives the appearance more like that of an alley than a traditional street.

Mature evergreen trees stand as the tallest elements in this area. Many of these are seen in early photographs of the town and are a part of the area's historic character. This is especially true along the ridge. These give a distinct character to the area and establish a larger scale that helps tie many lots together visually.

**Historic preservation issues**

Certain historic structures merit special note: The Carter Museum site is found in this Character Area. It is a log structure that is particularly significant because of its architectural character and its association with persons who made significant contributions to the state. Development in the vicinity of this site should be especially sensitive to this context. The open space of the Carter Museum site itself is also important as it helps to provide a sense of the original setting of the building. Development of on-site parking or other improvements should respect this character.

A second site of interest contains two historic houses lying to the north of the court house. This row presents a streetscape conveying a sense of character from the period of historic significance. These buildings are now used for county offices. These buildings should be preserved and future improvement plans should seek to protect their historic integrity.
Some historic secondary structures also survive in the North End Character Area. These are more prominently visible than in other areas of town because of the convergence of the street grid at Ridge and French Streets which makes rear yards visible directly from the street. Of particular note is a historic stable on French Street. All of the historic secondary structures found in the area should be preserved.

**Design goal for the North End Residential Character Area**
The overall goal for the North End Residential Character Area is to reinforce and re-establish the historic scale and character of development. The following design standards are written to help achieve this goal.

**Conceptual design standards for the North End Character Area follow:**

**Building Setbacks**

**Policy:**
Most buildings in the area have front and side yards, although many yard depths have been altered as a result of widening the street. More yards should be established in this area as new construction occurs and no new buildings should be located closer to the street than the typical setback line for the block.

**Design Standard:**

134. **Provide substantial front and side yards.**
- This is a very important standard.
- Align building fronts with other historic buildings in the area.
- The North End area setbacks occur as front and side yards rather than extensive hard-surface areas.
- Setbacks shall be reviewed on an individual basis. New buildings in these areas should be set back in line with traditional house types. Locating a building at the sidewalk line, in a commercial building format, would be inappropriate in this context. Similarly, a setback that is farther back than the norm is inappropriate.
Note the characteristic setback dimensions may vary from block to block and the desired setback may be less than that described in the town's Development Code.

- Large side yards are especially encouraged along south sides of properties to take advantage of winter sun and mountain views.
- Match existing fence lines in defining front and side yards.

Policy:
The alignment of setbacks is reinforced by the character of front and side yards that were often defined by trees or fences. This tradition should be reinforced when designing new structures.

Design Standard:

135. Maintain the lawn character of yards, especially those that are visible from the street.
- Front yards should be designed predominantly with plant materials, including trees and grass, as opposed to hard-surfaced paving.

Parking

Policy:
Automobile parking is a relatively new use that was introduced in Breckenridge after the initial periods of historic development. Most cars 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 North End should be minimized, particularly with respect to parking provided on individual building lots.

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 that is perceived to be allocated to front yards. This parking arrangement significantly deviates 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 Standards:

136. Minimize the visual impact of parking as seen from the street.
- Avoid locating parking in front 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 fronts of buildings is discouraged. Garages that are built as smaller, separate secondary structures are preferred. These should be sited to the rear or side.
- Use of shared driveways that would access parking in the rear is encouraged.

137. Develop parking such that the front edge of the site is retained as yard wherever feasible.

Building Scale

Policy:
Historically, residential structures in the area were one or one-and-a-half stories in height. New buildings should encourage a sense of pedestrian scale for the area as well as reinforce the historic building scale. The scale of the building should also be in proportion to typical lot sizes.

Historic buildings that survive range between 700 and 2,900 square feet. The average size is 1,500 square feet.

Use of shared driveways that would access parking in the rear is encouraged.

This apartment building has exposed parking in front which is inappropriate.
Design Standards:

138. New buildings should be in scale with existing historic and supporting buildings in the North End.
- Development densities of less than nine units per acre are recommended.
- Locating some building area below grade to minimize the mass of structures is encouraged.
- Locate larger masses back from public view.
- Use landscaping, especially large trees, to screen larger building masses.

139. Divide site functions into 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:
In terms of building form, the North End Character Area was historically characterized by sloped roofs and wood frame dwellings. Larger, multi-unit structures from the 1960s and 1970s that have weakened the continuity of historic building scale are discouraged. Recently constructed residences are as tall as three stories. Some have garages integrated into the structure, which face directly onto the street, instead of onto an alley. Roof dimensions are often larger than those found historically. 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:

140. 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 (during the period of historic significance).
141. Use roof forms that reflect the angle, scale, and proportion of those of historic buildings in the North End Character Area.
- The roof shape has a large impact on the character of a structure.
- Those styles which were popular in the 19th century and are still in use today, such as high gable, high hip and shed 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.
- Include single-story roofs on porches. L-shaped porches that wrap around to side yards are especially appropriate.

**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 Standards:

142. **Building height should be similar to nearby historic buildings.**
- Primary facades should be 1 or 1 and 1/2 stories tall. (Some 2-story portions may be considered if they are set back from the street.)
- Refer to height limits in ordinance. (Note that the height limits are absolute maximums and do not imply that all building should reach these limits. In some blocks, lower buildings will be more compatible with the context.)

143. **Maintain the alignment of porch roof heights in the area.**
- Porches were typically one story only. 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.
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**Facade Widths**

Policy:
New buildings should have primary façades similar in dimension to those found historically. Typical building widths of surviving historic buildings range between 15 and 34 feet; the average is 23 feet.

Design Standard:

144. 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.

**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.

Use painted wood lap siding as the primary building material.
Design Standard:

145. 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 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) may only be considered as an accent material. Stone which is 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 type because they serve well to shed snow in this high snow-fall community. Roofing materials have a significant impact on overall design, and therefore should be compatible in pattern, texture and color with those used historically in the area.

Design Standard:

146. Use roofing materials similar to those found historically.

- Smooth-sawn wooden shingles and rolled seam sheet metal are appropriate materials. These are encouraged.
- Corrugated tin was used historically and, if used with a non-glossy finish, is 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 are seen on many lots, usually located to the rear of the main house. 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 Breckenridge's historic scene. 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 how life was lived in earlier days. These should be preserved. This tradition of developing a site with a complex of buildings should be continued in new construction.

Design Standard:
147. **Use secondary structures in new development.**
- Consider housing utilitarian functions, such as parking, storage, and waste receptacles in secondary structures.
- 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.

Finally, design standards that address more detailed issues follow:
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:
148. Use windows and doors similar in size and shape to those used traditionally.
   - Windows should be similar in size and shape to those used historically.
   - Double-hung windows are appropriate.
   - Bay windows that are rectangular in plan (not angled) may be considered.

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:
149. 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 North End Residential Character Area. Most 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. When decorative features are used in new construction, they should be applied in a similar spirit.

Design Standard:
150. Use ornament and detail in keeping with the modest character of the North 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:
151. Use evergreen trees in front yards where feasible.
- Begin with a tree, or cluster of trees, large enough in scale to have immediate visual impact.
Policy:
Trees help give a block uniform character. Cottonwood trees were originally planted along the street edges. The 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 traditions.

Design Standards:
152. Reinforce the alignment of street trees wherever feasible.
   - Planting new cottonwood trees to define the street edge is encouraged.

153. Respect existing stands of mature trees.

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:
154. Use landscaping to mitigate undesirable visual impacts.
   - Use large trees to reduce the perceived scale where larger building masses would abruptly contrast the historic scale of the area.
   - Include hedges and other masses of lower-scale plantings to screen service areas.
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