

Chapter 1 Streetscape and Lot Features

Policy:

Historic landscapes and landscape elements that remain intact should be preserved. Additions to the landscape should be compatible with the historic context of the district or landmark property.

Note:

A Right-of-Way permit from the Engineering Department is required for modifications within the public right-of-way, including planting strips, sidewalks and irrigation ditches. No tree over 4 inches in caliper may be removed without a tree removal permit from the Parks Department.

design elements. In some cases, these features have historic significance; in others, their designs are still important because they can affect one's ability to interpret the historic structures.

The planting strips with shade trees and irrigation ditches were created in 1882 by the city, and private property owners were encouraged to plant their own shade trees.

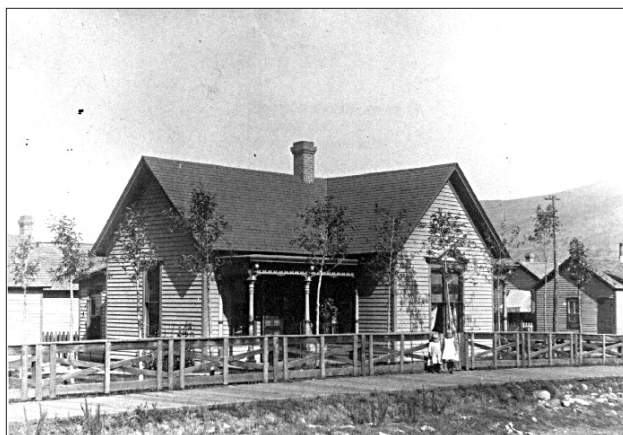
Background

The character of historic structures is greatly influenced by the manner in which their sites are landscaped and streets are designed. At a block level, street pavings, trees, lights and other furnishings combine in streetscapes that are important considerations in the historic districts. On individual sites, the arrangement of trees and shrubbery and the use of fences are important

Key Features of Lots

Planting strips

Planting strips are generally the band of grass between the curb and the sidewalk, or between the street and front property line. Be aware that this is City property, not private property, and work in this area must be approved. A strip may contain an irrigation ditch and a row of street trees if it is wide enough to support the root system. This coupling of planting strips and street trees



On individual sites, the arrangement of trees and shrubbery and the use of fences are important design elements. (Historic photo courtesy of Aspen Historical Society, date unknown.)



Historic landscape features, including trees, lawns and shrubbery contribute to the character of historic properties in Aspen and should be preserved.





Mature trees are important elements of the historic streetscape.

provides a rhythm along the block, as well as shade for pedestrians. This tradition should be continued. Placing paving materials in the planting strip should be avoided.

Sidewalks

Generally, sidewalks exist only along Main Street and in the Commercial Core. These sidewalks, which were originally boardwalks, are historically significant elements that contribute to the area's inviting atmosphere and provide spaces for walking and personal interaction.

Fences

Originally, wood picket fences enclosed many front yards. The vertical slats were set apart, with spaces between, and the overall height of the fence was generally less than three feet. Wrought iron and wire fences also were used in early domestic landscapes. Where any of these early fences survive, they should be preserved. In a situation where the original fence is missing, a new fence may be used if it is similar in character to one seen traditionally.

Retaining walls

Retaining walls were sometimes used on steep slopes. Some of these walls survive and are important character-defining features. Whenever feasible, they should be preserved.

Private yard

While most historic plant materials have been replaced over time, some specimens do survive. Common historic plants in Aspen from the Victorian era include lilacs, sweetpeas and yellow rose bushes. In some situations, the traditional planting pattern has been retained even if new plants have been planted. Mature trees on private property must be retained unless approved by the Parks Department for removal.

Site lighting

Traditionally, lighting within a site was minimal. An occasional garden light was seen, but porch lights were usually the only exterior illumination. (For additional information, see the City's Lighting Standards.)



Fences

1.1 Preserve original fences.

- Replace only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair. Replacement elements should match the existing fence.

1.2 A new replacement fence should use materials that appear similar to that of the original.

- Any fence which is visible from a public right-of-way must be built of wood or wrought iron. Wire fences also may be considered.
- A wood picket fence is an appropriate replacement in most locations. A simple wire or metal fence, similar to traditional "wrought iron," also may be considered.
- Chain link is prohibited and solid "stockade" fences are only allowed in side and rear yards.

1.3 A new replacement fence should have a "transparent" quality allowing views into the yard from the street.

- A fence that defines a front yard is usually low to the ground and "transparent" in nature.
- On residential properties, a fence which is located forward of the front building facade may not be taller than 42" from natural grade. (For additional information, see the City of Aspen's "Residential Design Standards".)
- A privacy fence may be used in back yards and along alleys, but not forward of the front facade of a building.
- Note that using no fencing at all is often the best approach.
- Contemporary interpretations of traditional fences should be compatible with the historic context.

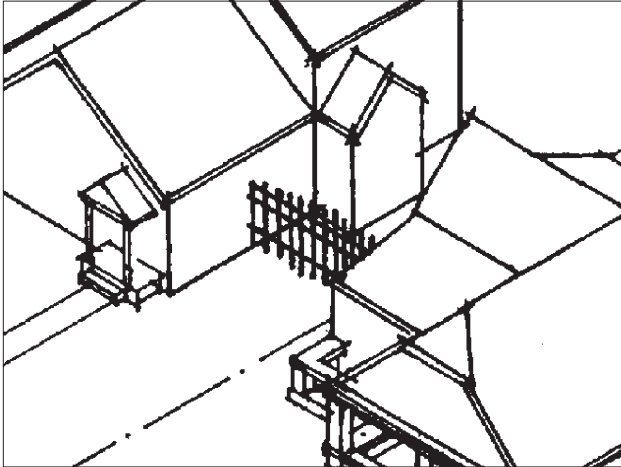


Original fences, such as this one, should be preserved.



Privacy fences may be used in back yards and along alleys.





A side yard fence which extends between two homes should be set back from the street facade.



Replacement or new fencing between side yards and along the alley should be compatible with the historic context.

1.4 New fence components should be similar in scale with those seen traditionally.

- Fence columns or piers should be proportional to the fence segment.

1.5 A side yard fence which extends between two homes should be set back from the street-facing facade.

- This setback should be significant enough to provide a sense of open space between homes.

1.6 Replacement or new fencing between side yards and along the alley should be compatible with the historic context.

- A side yard fence is usually taller than its front yard counterpart. It also is less transparent. A side yard fence may reach heights taller than front yard fences (up to six feet), but should incorporate transparent elements to minimize the possible visual impacts.
- Consider staggering the fence boards on either side of the fence rail. This will give the appearance of a solid plank fence when seen head on.
- Also consider using lattice, or other transparent detailing, on the upper portions of the fence.

Retaining Walls

1.7 Preserve original retaining walls.

- Replace only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair. Any replacement materials should match the original in color, texture, size and finish.
- Painting a historic masonry retaining wall, or covering it with stucco or other cementitious coatings, is not allowed.



1.8 Maintain the historic height of a retaining wall.

- Increasing the height of a wall to create a privacy screen is inappropriate. If a fence is needed for security, consider using wrought iron, similar to those seen historically, that is mounted on top of the retaining wall.

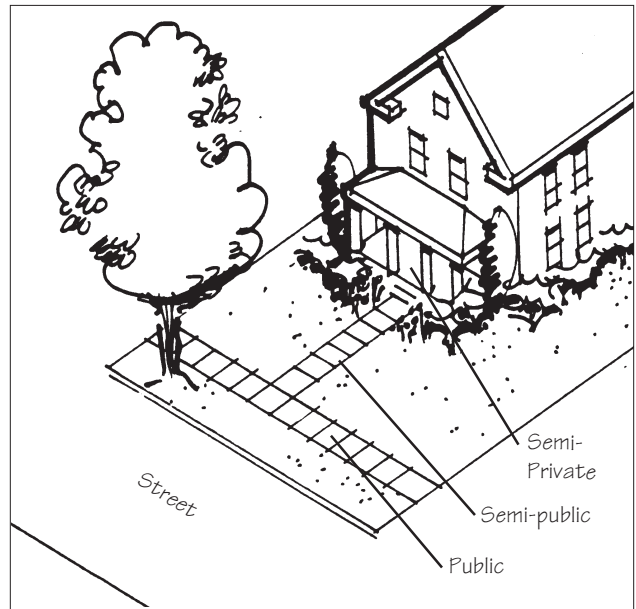
Walkways

1.9 Maintain the established progression of public-to-private spaces when considering a rehabilitation project.

- This includes a sequence of experiences, beginning with the "public" sidewalk, proceeding along a "semi-public" walkway, to a "semi-private" porch or entry feature and ending in the "private" spaces beyond.
- Provide a walkway running perpendicular from the street to the front entry. Meandering walkways are discouraged, except where it is needed to avoid a tree.
- Use paving materials that are similar to those used historically for the building style. Concrete, wood or sandstone may be appropriate for certain building styles.



Provide a walkway running perpendicular from the street to the front entry.



Maintain the established progression of public-to-private spaces when considering a rehabilitation project.

Private Yard

1.10 Preserve historic elements of the yard to provide an appropriate context for historic structures.

- The front yard should be maintained in a traditional manner, with planting material and sod, and not covered with paving, for example.

1.11 Preserve and maintain mature landscaping on site, particularly landmark trees and shrubs.

- Protect established vegetation during construction to avoid damage. Replacement of damaged, aged or diseased trees must be approved by the Parks Department.
- If a tree must be removed as part of the addition or alteration, replace it with species of a large enough scale to have a visual impact in the early years of the project.

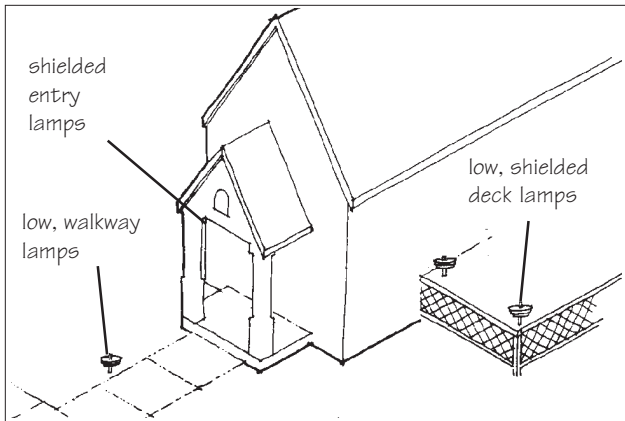


Historically significant planting designs, such as along this alley, should be preserved.





Do not locate plants or trees in areas that will obscure significant architectural features or block views to the building.



Use shielded lights which direct light onto walking surfaces to minimize the visual impacts of site lighting.

1.12 Preserve and maintain historically significant planting designs.

- Retaining historic planting beds, landscape features and walkways is encouraged.

1.13 Revisions or additions to the landscape should be consistent with the historic context of the site.

- Select plant and tree material according to its mature size, to allow for the long-term impact of mature growth.
- Reserve the use of exotic plants to small areas for accent.
- Do not cover grassy areas with gravel, rock or paving materials.

1.14 Additions to the landscape that could interfere with historic structures are inappropriate.

- Do not plant climbing ivy or trees too close to a building. New trees should be no closer than the mature canopy size.
- Do not locate plants or trees in locations that will obscure significant architectural features or block views to the building.
- It is not appropriate to plant a hedge row that will block views into the yard.

Site Lighting

1.15 Minimize the visual impacts of site lighting.

- Site lighting should be shielded to avoid glare onto adjacent properties. Focus lighting on walks and entries, rather than up into trees and onto facade planes.



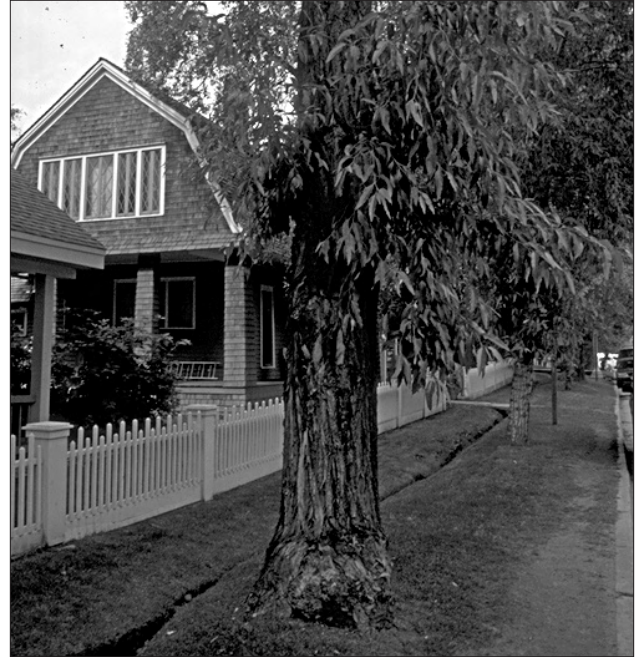
Streetscape

1.16 Preserve historically significant landscape designs and features.

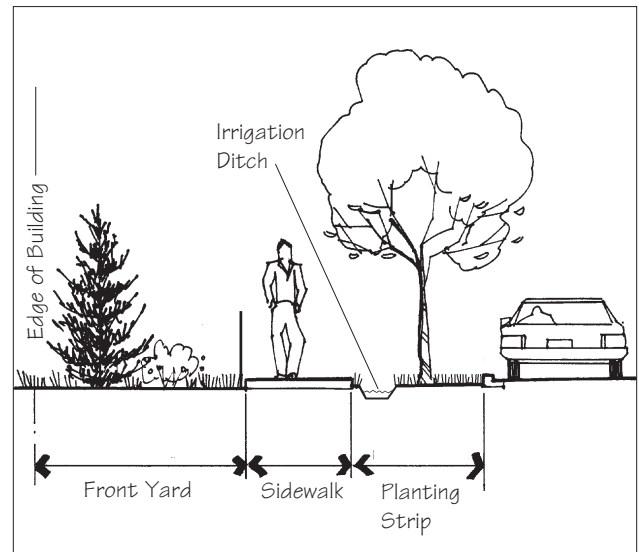
- This includes the arrangement of trees, shrubs, plant beds, irrigation ditches and sidewalks in the public right-of-way.

1.17 Maintain historic irrigation ditches as an integral component of the streetscape.

- The character of an irrigation ditch should be maintained.
- It is inappropriate to use an irrigation ditch as a planting bed, or to fill it with another material.
- Ditches cannot be culverted except where crossed by a walkway or driveway, and a culvert must be approved by the Parks Department.



Maintain historic irrigation ditches as an integral component of the streetscape.



Preserve historically significant landscape designs and features such as the arrangement of trees, shrubs, plant beds, irrigation ditches and sidewalks in the public right-of-way.



