

---

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

---

*for* LOWER DOWNTOWN STREETScape

---



DENVER LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
& PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE



CITY and COUNTY of DENVER  
1991

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>	Guidelines	<b>15</b>
Lower Downtown's Character		Seating	
Lower Downtown's Scale	<b>2</b>	Sidewalk Cafes	
Building Types		Trash Receptacles	
		Bicycle Parking	<b>16</b>
<b>USING THESE GUIDELINES</b>	<b>3</b>	Railings	
Guideline Organization		Newspaper Vending Boxes	<b>17</b>
Purpose of the Guidelines	<b>4</b>	Drinking Fountains	
Existing Standards		Bollards	
Management District		Directories	
The Review Process			
		<b>HISTORIC INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PAVING</b>	<b>7</b>	Historic Perspective	
Historic Perspective		Intent	
Streets		Guidelines	<b>19</b>
Intent	<b>8</b>	Plaques	
Guidelines	<b>9</b>		
Sidewalk Width		<b>ART</b>	<b>20</b>
Sidewalk Materials		Historic Perspective	
Intersection Materials		Intent	
Handicapped Access		Guidelines	<b>21</b>
Street Names in the Pavement		Materials	
		Placement	
<b>LIGHTING</b>	<b>10</b>	Art Themes	
Historic Perspective		Lighting	
Intent	<b>11</b>	Maintenance	
Guidelines		Construction	
Lighting Placement			
Light Poles, Luminaires, and Bases		<b>LANDSCAPING</b>	<b>22</b>
		Historic Perspective	
<b>REGULATORY SIGNS AND CONTROLS</b>	<b>12</b>	Intent	
Historic Perspective		Guidelines	<b>23</b>
Intent		General Placement	
Guidelines	<b>13</b>	Tree selection	
Traffic and Pedestrian Signals		Tree Size	
Parking Meters		Tree Location	<b>24</b>
Regulatory Signs		Tree Grates & Wells	<b>25</b>
District Gateway Signs		Planter Pots	
		Recommended Street Trees	<b>26</b>
<b>STREET FURNITURE AND AMENITIES</b>	<b>14</b>	Trees Not Recommended	<b>29</b>
Historic Perspective		Trees Not Allowed	
Intent		<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>30</b>

---

# I N T R O D U C T I O N

---

**L**ower Downtown is Denver's birthplace. It has the Rocky Mountain region's largest collection of urban historic buildings, mostly constructed around the turn of the 20th century. Designated an historic district by Denver's Landmark Commission in 1988, Lower Downtown is reviving and celebrating its heritage through both public and private efforts.

## **Lower Downtown's Character**

The character of a street or an area is much like the character of a person. The street and its building facades are the "face" presented to the public. Like the face of a person, it can be friendly or hostile; it can be welcoming or harsh. The character of the street and the building facades along it thus exert a strong influence over the atmosphere of the pedestrian environment making people feel either welcome or unwanted.

One of the reasons often stated for people's affection for Lower Downtown is that they like its "character." The doorways and windows that allow the pedestrian to look into the buildings, the warmth of the red brick, and the articulation of the architecture all combine to create a friendly and inviting atmosphere. Maintaining and enhancing this character is an important aspect of both design review and of these guidelines for Lower Downtown.



The Denver Union Terminal Welcome Arch (date unknown) *Courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western History Department*

---

### Lower Downtown's Scale

Most of Lower Downtown's historic buildings are constructed of red brick. Some have special detailing such as cast iron columns or decorative brick patterns. Vertical windows, detailed cornices, and two, three, and four story buildings with historic storefronts add to the character.

The architectural scale and proportions of the facade design, their overall height, vertical, and horizontal dimensions are scaled to human proportion and do not overwhelm the pedestrian. Doorways are generally not oversized, there are almost no windowless, doorless walls, and the pedestrian is not dwarfed by dark canyon-like streets created by towering skyscrapers. In contrast



The Barth Hotel entrance fan window.  
*MacLennan 1991*

to some monolithic modern building materials, the texture of the brick buildings and the size of the bricks themselves give the pedestrian clues about size and help create a "human" scale in Lower Downtown. Just like reinforcing the District's

character, reinforcing the human scale of Lower Downtown is an important goal.

### Building Types

A variety of building types occurs throughout the Lower Downtown District with some concentrations of certain building uses in specific areas. Warehouse buildings and a few older hotels are predominantly located near Union Station while smaller buildings are generally located on the named streets closer to Denver's Downtown core. Small lot development - resulting in a variety of uses and frequent building entrances along any given block - is common. A few non-historic buildings can be found on Market and Blake Streets. Empty lots, generally used for surface parking, occur in a



1600 block of Market Street across the street from the Market Street Transit Station.  
*Leese 1991*

random or dispersed fashion throughout Lower Downtown. Union Station terminates the view down 17th Street and is the symbolic heart of Lower Downtown because of its historical significance as well as its architectural dominance.

All of this combines to create a pedestrian scale, richness of character, and a sense of history unique in the Rocky Mountain Region.

### USING THESE GUIDELINES

Anyone proposing changes to the public right of way should refer to these guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, designers, developers, City agencies, artists, business owners, and property owners.

The public right of way is defined as any street, sidewalk, or alley that is the property of the City.



Looking down 17th Street at the Denver Union Terminal train station. *MacLennan 1991*

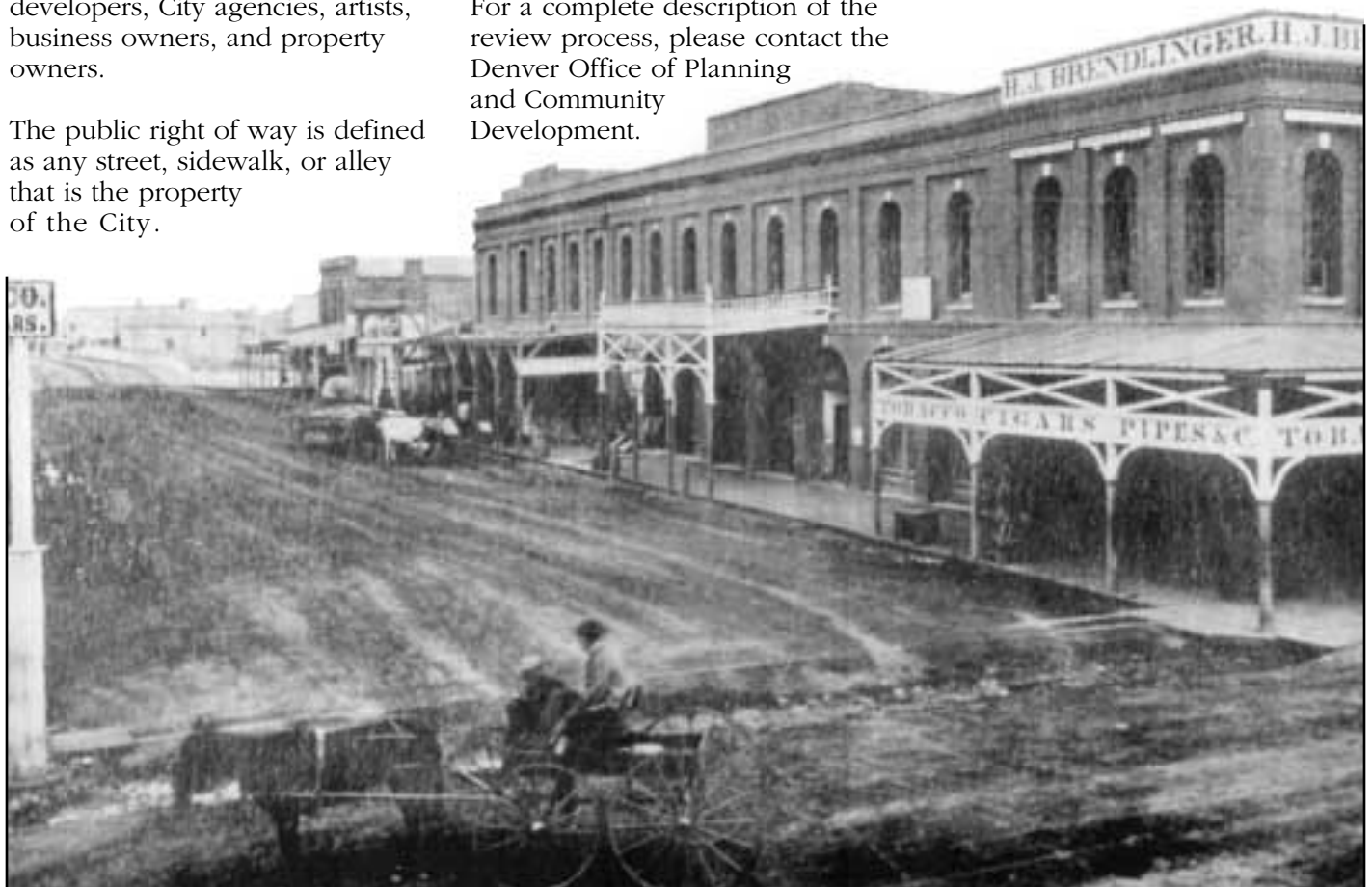
Before implementation, all plans must be approved by the Lower Downtown Design Review Board. For a complete description of the review process, please contact the Denver Office of Planning and Community Development.

### Guideline Organization

This document is organized so that each streetscape element is addressed within the following framework:

- **HISTORIC PRECEDENTS**
- **INTENT**
- **GUIDELINES.**

Maps, photographs, and drawings provide additional clarification. Names and addresses of manufacturers of the products shown are available from the Design Review Board. The B-7 zoning amendment, which established the Lower Downtown Design Review Board, is included for reference. (See Appendix A)



Corner of Blake and 15th Street looking toward Cherry Creek. (circa 1860-69) *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*

---

### **Purpose of the Guidelines**

The purpose of these guidelines is to direct streetscape design so that it supports and enhances the historic character and human scale of Lower Downtown. They have been written to guide design solutions toward:

- historical precedents whenever possible and practical;
- interpretation of historic development, architecture, and events to “tell the story” of Lower Downtown;
- simple, functional, and cost effective plans;
- quality materials that are durable, easy to maintain, and related to Lower Downtown's character;
- a consistent pattern that unifies the District;
- a pedestrian friendly environment; and,
- the renovation and redevelopment of the District.

These guidelines do not replace the Design Review Board Process nor are they intended as inflexible rules or standards. Exceptions to them may be granted if more appropriate solutions consistent with the intent of the guidelines can be found. The Lower Downtown Design Review Board, while interested in having project designers understand its goals for the District, is also interested in encouraging creative solutions to design problems. The Board encourages imaginative solutions to the difficult problems that are frequently encountered while working in the context of historic renovation.

These Lower Downtown guidelines are focused on the major components of streetscape -

paving, lighting, street furniture, etc. - and are intended to create a streetscape framework that is in harmony with Lower Downtown's historic past and yet responsive to modern day needs.

### **Existing Standards**

During the past several years as streetscape elements have been installed, some standards have emerged. For example, to create unity, all of the recently installed streetscape elements have been painted to match the paint specification "federal green #14056." Throughout the document, the guidelines refer to this paint specification.

Continuing this paint color when new elements are added will create a cohesive quality to the great variety of fixtures that must be accommodated on the street.

Street furnishings and lighting fixtures installed as part of the City's 1989 Lower Downtown Streetscape Project are considered standard designs for the Historic District. Each of these elements is further explained in the guidelines and accompanied by drawings and photographs.

### **Management District**

If Lower Downtown forms or becomes part of a maintenance or management district, additional streetscape ideas such as informational kiosks or other elements that require continual maintenance may be added.

Festivals organized to celebrate Lower Downtown can also be managed by a district organization. Such festivals could, for example, include celebrations of Lower Downtown's railroad heritage, its

colorful history at the turn of the century, or its current role as the arts and entertainment center of Downtown.

### **THE REVIEW PROCESS**

The Lower Downtown Guidelines work in concert with the provisions of the 1987 B-7 zoning regulations. Lower Downtown's Design Review Board, created by the B-7 zoning, will review all streetscape plans before a revocable permit will be granted by the City. (A revocable permit must be obtained before construction of streetscape improvements can begin.)

The design review process can be initiated by contacting the Denver Office of Planning and Community Development to schedule a pre-application meeting. At this meeting the applicant will be given details of the process and submittal requirements. It is important that project designers understand how the guidelines may affect their project. The pre-application process provides an opportunity for informal discussion of how the guidelines affect specific circumstances of individual development projects.

For further information, contact:  
**Denver Planning and Community Development Office**  
200 West 14th Avenue Denver,  
Colorado 80204  
(303) 640-2736 (ask for the  
Preservation Specialist) or:

**Chairman:**  
**Lower Downtown Design Review Board**

c/o The Denver Planning and  
Community Development Office  
200 West 14th Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80204



Denver Union Terminal (circa 1880-94) *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department, J. Collier*



Denver Union Terminal (circa 1894-1915) *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*



Denver Union Terminal (circa 1915) *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*



The Lower Downtown gateway monument at Wazee Street and the Cherry Creek Channel. *Leese 1991*

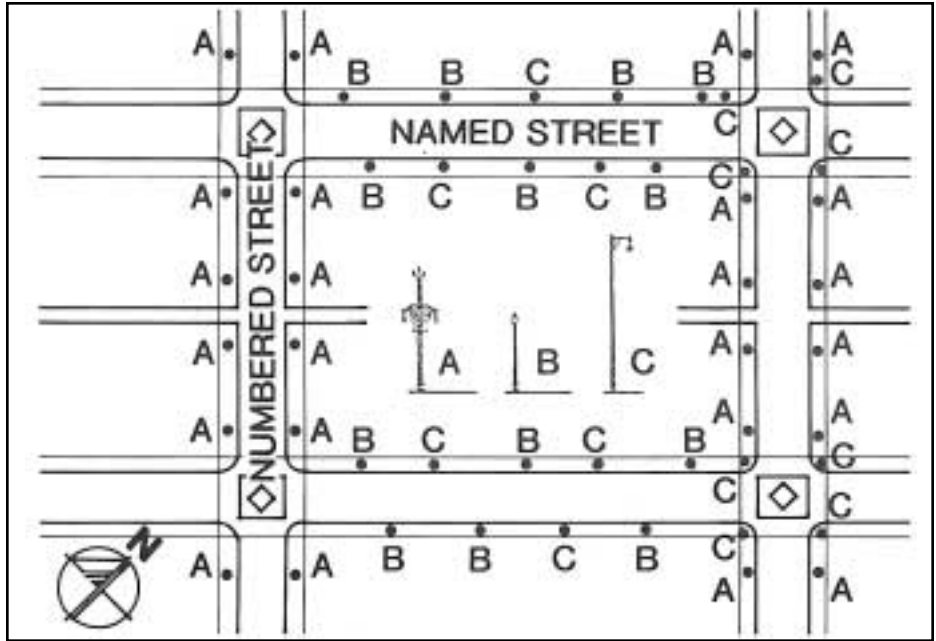
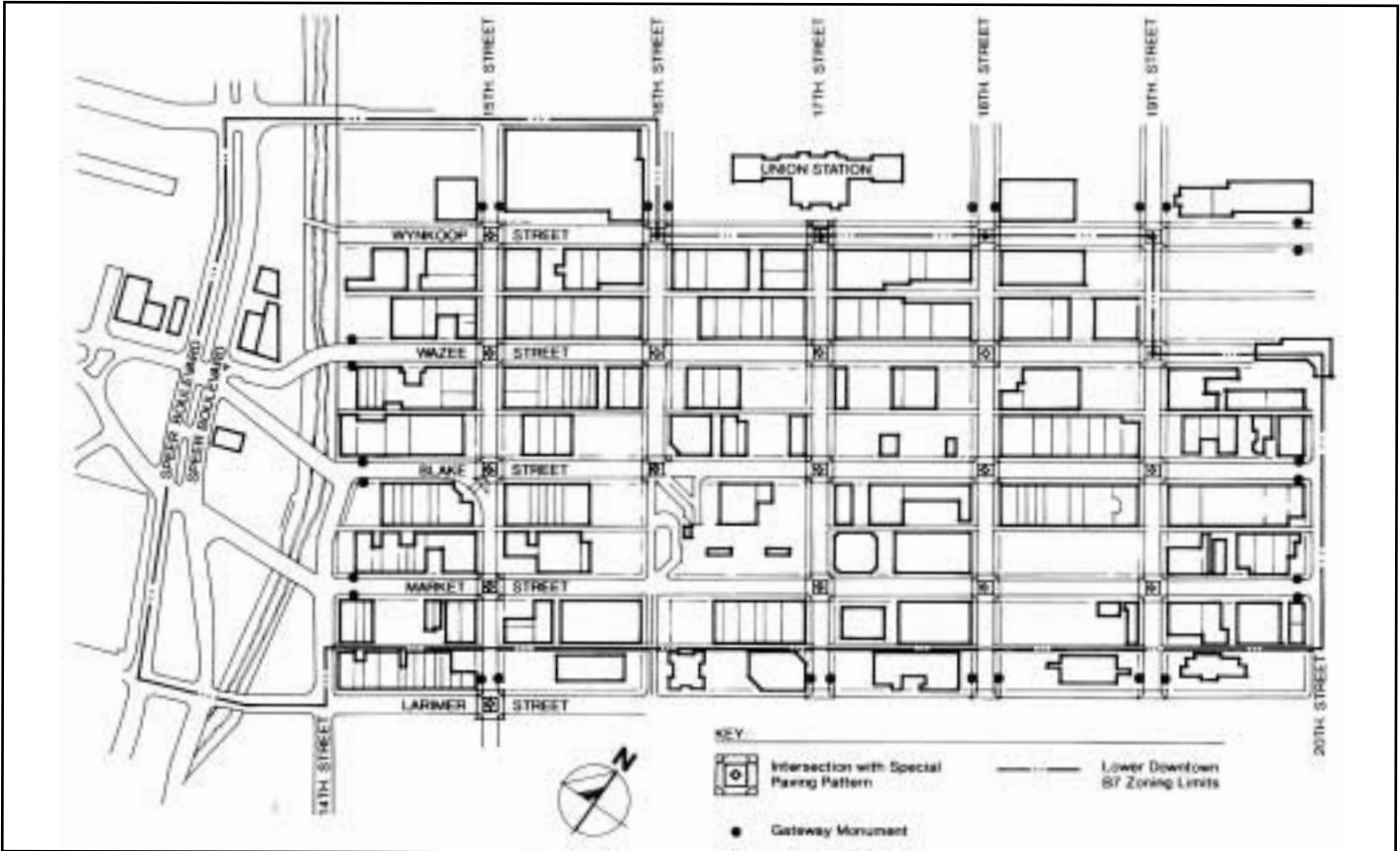


Diagram of a typical block in Lower Downtown showing the arrangement of streetlights, intermediate lights and pedestrian lights.. *DHM 1991*



Map of Lower Downtown B-7 Zone District showing locations of special paved intersections and gateway monuments.

*DHM 1991*



---

# G U I D E L I N E S

---

## PAVING

### HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

#### Sidewalks

Early sidewalks in Lower Downtown were wooden. Wood was abandoned after two devastating fires in the 1860's. Later, a variety of other materials appeared including brick, and sandstone and granite cobble. Sidewalks are varied in width because of unique conditions throughout the District including the old viaducts, diagonal parking, and loading docks. And, today, there is still an eclectic variety of sidewalk widths and paving materials including sandstone, concrete, and tile, to name a few.

#### Streets

The streets in Lower Downtown were originally dirt that often turned to mud when it rained or the snow melted. Cobbles

replaced the dirt as the city grew. Railroad tracks were a part of many streets and alleys so that rail cars could be unloaded directly into the warehouses. Later, cobbled streets were overlain with asphalt. In places, cobbles and old rail lines can still be seen.

Today the streets are mostly asphalt with some concrete intersections. Along 17th, the

intersections were redesigned (as part of the City's 1989 Lower Downtown Urban Design Project) with crosswalks and a central diamond-shaped area made of brick colored concrete pavers.

The new intersections have two other important features: walkover curbs of concrete banded by pavers and bronze street names at the corners.



*Above:* Cobble and trolley tracks on Wynkoop Street. *MacLennan 1991*

*Right:* Market Street between 14th and 16th Streets (15th Street intersection at center.) *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*



**I N T E R N T**

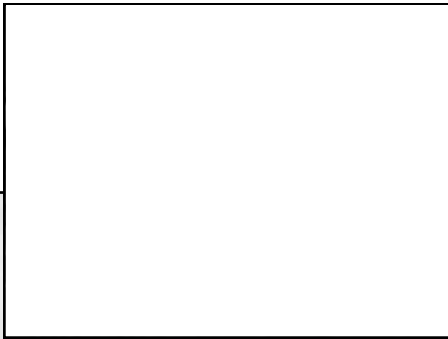
It is not practical to bring back the cobbled streets of times past because of their uneven surface (which makes walking difficult), maintenance problems, and the high cost of installation. However, there are some areas of Lower Downtown that do not receive heavy pedestrian and traffic use, and where there are cobbles and tracks showing through the asphalt. In these areas, where it is possible, the cobbles and railroad tracks should not be covered over with asphalt, but rather allowed to remain exposed.

The brick colored pavers at the crosswalks and intersection corners, recall the color, texture, and image of the old cobbled streets. The street names at each corner help orient pedestrians. Pavers at the curb edge signal to the visually-impaired that this is the edge of the pedestrian area. Over time, having every intersection in Lower Downtown reconstructed with this paving design

will accomplish three objectives:

- provide historic reference;
- create a unifying and regular district pattern; and
- remind vehicular traffic that this is a special district that caters to pedestrians.

The intersection pattern, including the corner details, were designed to create a unique identity for Lower Downtown and should not be repeated elsewhere. (See map on page 6.)



*Left:* The intersection of 17th Street and Wynkoop looking north. *MacLennan 1991*  
*Below:* A Lower Downtown streetscene. (date unknown) *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*



# GUIDELINES



An example of how trees and lights have been used to define the pedestrian space on the sidewalk. (The northeast side of 15th Street between Market and Blake looking NW.)  
*Leese 1991*

## Sidewalk Width

For pedestrian safety and comfort, and to allow room for sidewalk cafes and other activities, the goal for minimum sidewalk width is 16 feet. Where there is an historic building with a loading dock, unique feature, or special traffic condition, custom solutions may be necessary to retain building access and the historic pattern. In these cases, the sidewalk width may have to be adjusted. This should be discussed with the Transportation Division of the Public Works Department and the Denver Office of Planning and Community Development. All plans will be reviewed by the Design Review Board for Lower Downtown.

The concrete paver crosswalk and intersection at the west corner of 17th Street and Wynkoop.  
*MacIenman 1991*



## Sidewalk Materials

Concrete, with simple scoring patterns that relate to architectural elements on building facades, is recommended for sidewalks in Lower Downtown. Flagstone or other material may be used for special accent areas related to major architectural building features, creating a larger scale pattern on the street. It is hoped that this will eventually be repeated throughout the District.

Property owners may want to use decorative materials or details in the sidewalk to create a "welcome mat" for their business. Special materials or treatment may be



Flagstone paving "welcome mat" at the entrance to the Oxford Hotel.  
*MacIenman 1991*

proposed and will be reviewed by the Design Review Board through the Denver Office of Planning and Community Development

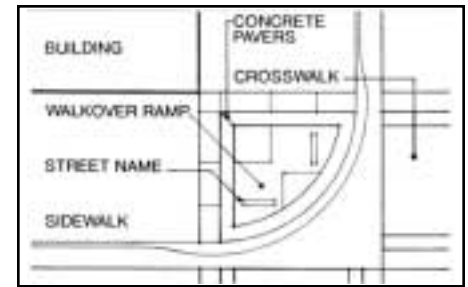
## Intersection Materials

Any intersection reconstruction should be designed with brick colored pavers and concrete as shown. Real brick or cobble is impractical because of its lack of strength, uneven surface, and high installation cost. All intersections will be constructed with the design pattern used on 17th Street.

## Handicapped Access

All intersection corners should be designed with walkover curbs per City standard as seen on 17th

Street. The brick detail at the edges of each corner is designed



Plan of typical Lower Downtown intersection corner.  
*DHM 1991*

as a warning strip to signal visually-impaired people using their canes as they cross the street. Also, note the revision to the concrete scoring pattern at the sidewalk intersection. Even where there is a loading dock, walkover ramps should be included if possible.

## Street Names in the Pavement

The sidewalks at all new intersections, should include the street name in bronze. The street names are located where pedestrians wait to cross the street, thus reminding them where they are. This detail, special to Lower Downtown, helps orient pedestrians and is consistent with the goal of creating a pedestrian friendly environment and strengthening the sense of the District's character.

The brass street name embedded in concrete at 17th and Wynkoop intersection.  
*Leese 1991*



---

# LIGHTING

## HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Photographs taken of Lower Downtown at the turn of the century show diamond shaped gas fixtures for street lights. In 1910, Denver's "Art Commission" toured the country to see what had been done in other cities with the new electrified lights. The Commission recommended a series of lights for the numbered streets throughout the Downtown.

The light fixtures were twenty-eight and one half feet tall and carried the electric and trolley car wires on a decorative finial at the top. A pendulous light source hung from a decorative filigree ornament on the side to serve street and pedestrian traffic.

These "intermediate" lights were used as the basis to design new lights for the City's 1989 Lower Downtown Streetscape Project. (They are called "intermediate" because their luminaire height is about halfway between the pedestrian light and the overhead streetlight.)

The double globe lights were installed on 17th Street as part of that project to call attention to the buildings along it and the view of Union Station at its terminus. The other numbered streets are slated to receive the single globe and fillagree light fixtures as can be seen on 14th and 15th Streets. Intermediate lights in Lower Downtown have a wattage of 70, but could be 50 watts if desired. The light source is high pressure sodium.



Oxford Hotel ( date unknown )

*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*

The pedestrian lights used on the named streets are similar to those originally used on Speer Boulevard except that they have acorn shaped globes rather than round. They are 14 feet high with an octagonal steel pole, cast iron base and high pressure sodium luminare. Pedestrian lights have the same wattage requirements as the intermediate

lights - 70 watts, but could be 50 watts if desired. These lights are intended to be the pedestrian light fixture for all named streets throughout Lower Downtown.

The third type of light found in Lower Downtown is the high masted overhead streetlight used at intersections and at mid-block

locations to provide an ambient light level safe for pedestrians and traffic. These are 35 feet high round steel poles, with a pendulous luminaire and are designed with an ornamental finial at the top, cast iron base, and other details to fit in with the pedestrian and intermediate lights. These lights have a wattage of 250 and their source is high pressure sodium. While all three types of lighting contribute to the lighting of the streets and sidewalks, only the light from the high mast overhead streetlights are considered in designing for the required minimum lighting levels for traffic safety.

**I N T E N T**

Beyond the intent to light the streets at night, the three lighting fixtures, used in combination, create a distinctive character for Lower Downtown. That character has both an authentic historic

reference and unique image.

Using these fixtures in the established pattern throughout Lower Downtown reinforces this character and the sense of a unified historic district. The intermediate lights have become a memorable image for the Historic District. The special fillagree design is associated with Lower Downtown. Therefore, they should only be used in the Lower Downtown Historic District; placing them in other parts of Downtown or the city would dilute their effect.

**GUIDELINES**

**Lighting Placement**

For typical street lighting placement, see the diagram on page 6. It shows the overall scheme developed for Lower Downtown which will be followed as streets are reconstructed in the future. The high-mast overhead lights (C)

are placed on each corner and mid-block as determined by the requirements of the Public Service Company, and the standards of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. There is some flexibility to the midblock location. Adjacent residential uses should be considered and where possible these lights should be located away from residential units, to avoid light trespass.

The intermediate lights (A) are spaced on an average of 53 feet, four per block face, adjusted to curb cuts, alleys, building entrances, and other special conditions.

The pedestrian lights (B) are spaced on an average of 72 feet, adjusted as necessary. There are four to six per block face depending on the number of curb cuts or other special situations along the street.

**Light Poles, Luminaires, & Bases**

There are many light poles, luminaires, and bases currently available on the market that are similar to the Lower Downtown pedestrian lights and the intermediate lights. There are great differences, however. For example, the poles may be a smaller dimension or even made of fiberglass rather than the fluted 11 gauge octagonal steel used for the pedestrian lights. To maintain a consistent standard, new lights should be matched in size, shape, material, and color to the ones already installed. For specifications on all aspects of lighting, contact the Transportation Division of the Department of Public Works and refer to the Lower Downtown Streetscape Project. ( 640-3958)

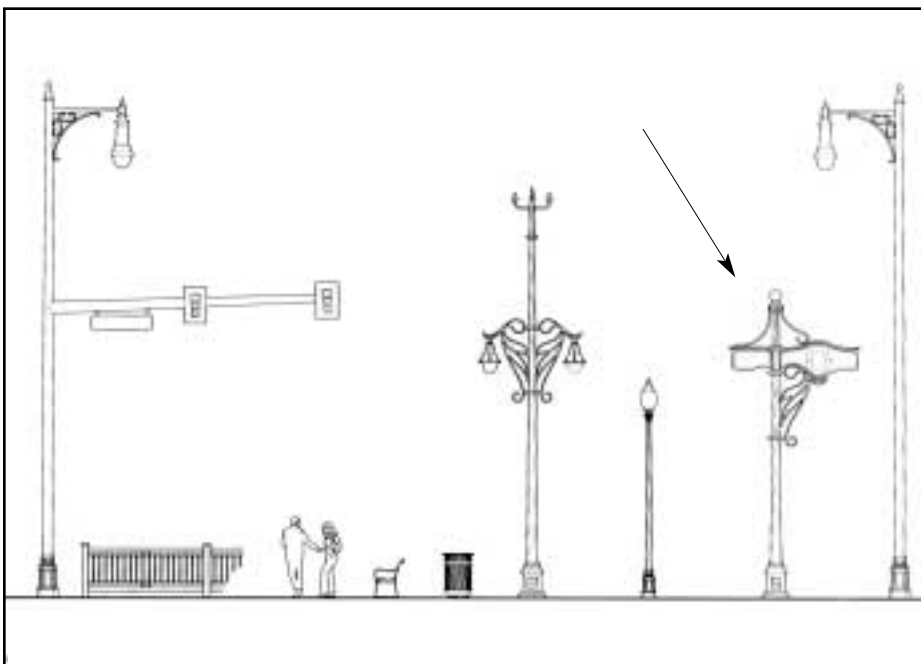


Illustration of the three types of lighting and other vertical elements used in Lower Downtown. DHM 1991

---

# REGULATORY SIGNS AND CONTROLS

## HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

As the automobile age came to Lower Downtown, so did the traffic signals, parking meters, and regulatory signs to control them. Today, there is a wide array of these poles, signs, and meters that has been installed and replaced at different times throughout Lower Downtown.

## I N T E N T

Regulatory signs, meters, and traffic signals are all important for maintaining a safe, orderly street for pedestrians, parking, commercial activity, and automobiles. It is important that they are easily read, visible, and understandable.

This can be accomplished with an organized approach that fits within the historic streetscape and minimizes visual clutter while still providing understandable guidance.

While regulatory sign poles should be limited as much as possible, their presence is preferable to direct attachment of signs to the ornamental street light poles. The lights are decorative in nature and provide a strong image for Lower Downtown. Attaching regulatory signs to intermediate and pedestrian lights detracts from this desired effect. If it becomes necessary for signs to be attached to traffic light poles and intersection overhead streetlights, permanent bolted fixtures painted federal green should be used.



Larimer Street (circa 1880-89) *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department, W.G. Chamberlain*

---

# GUIDELINES

## Traffic and Pedestrian Signals

The standards developed for the 1989 streetscape project will be used when replacing any traffic or pedestrian signal in Lower Downtown. The traffic light is a TS-8 pole (the standard pole currently used at all new Lower Downtown intersections) with a decorative cast iron base, finial, and luminaire. These are painted federal green as are all the light fixtures.

## Parking Meters

All parking meters in Lower Downtown will eventually be replaced with a fixture that has two meters on each pole and is painted federal green. (At present, the double-headed pole is not legal, but once the ordinance has

been changed, this will become standard in Lower Downtown reducing the number of fixtures by approximately 40%.)

Painting the meters will require that a sleeve be placed over the galvanized pole. These changes will be done after passage of the required ordinance and as replacement schedules can be accommodated over time.

## Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs are not to be attached to the pedestrian and intermediate street lights or buildings. However, if there is not enough sidewalk width, they may be attached to streetlight poles if the attachment banding is painted along with the pole, or flag mounted hardware is used. If they are on telspar poles, they should be efficiently organized

and the poles painted federal green.

## District Gateway Signs

Gateway signs announcing entries into the District will be placed as shown on the map on page 6. The Gateway signs define the edge of the Lower Downtown District and clearly mark its boundaries for both pedestrians and motorists.

There are currently twelve gateway signs at intersections on the edge of Lower Downtown. Eventually, every intersection at the perimeter of the district will have a gateway sign. When they are all in place, they will define the perimeter of the district. Specifications for gateway signs can be obtained through the Transportation Division of the Department of Public Works.



Larimer Street (circa 1880-89)

Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department, W. H. Jackson

---

# STREET FURNITURE & AMENITIES

## HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

The street as a public right-of-way responds to the needs of the time. Streets that once accommodated horses and railroad cars were quite different than they are today. Historically, when Lower Downtown was a "working district" with busy warehouses and storefronts, utilitarian loading docks, horse hitches, and street rail lines were common fixtures. The 1910 streetlights were the

dominant ornamental street fixture and Union Station's Welcome Arch its only form of public art.

Today, as Lower Downtown fulfills its role as an office, residential, and entertainment area, other street amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, clocks, drinking fountains, and public art are appropriate. While these features are new, they should still relate to the historic theme through color, material, and design.

## I N T E N T

The guidelines for street furniture and amenities seek to unify the

public right of way with an historic theme. All of the street furniture should be painted federal green.

Amenities - such as drinking fountains or clocks - could be suggested or added by individual property owners. They add uniqueness to the streetscape and should be designed to be harmonious with the Lower Downtown District's historic theme. Amenities should be placed in an orderly fashion either against the building or along the curb. They should not block the pedestrian path nor should they make maintenance difficult.



These trees, benches and railing at the Market Center, help to create a pleasant pedestrian environment.  
*Leese 1991*



# GUIDELINES



A "Bowery bench" on 17th Street. *MacLennan 1991*

## Seating

Strap metal benches, known as "Bowery benches," are the standard Lower Downtown sidewalk bench. They are placed to respond to adjacent land uses and transit stops. Benches will most likely be used in front of hotels and office buildings, at bus stops, and in public spaces. Property owners are encouraged to add these benches where appropriate.

Moveable chairs may be used in public open spaces and at sidewalk cafes. The standard metal mesh chair as used on the 16th Street Mall, should be used for this purpose. These chairs should be painted black, green or a neutral color.



"People-watching" at a sidewalk cafe on Blake near 16th Street *Brown 1991*

## Sidewalk Cafes

Sidewalk cafes are encouraged in Lower Downtown. They allow

patrons to enjoy people-watching, the District's interesting buildings, and the Colorado sunshine. The seating area should be well defined and easy to maintain. Metal railings painted federal green should be used to distinguish the outdoor cafe from the pedestrian path. Seating areas for cafes should not block the free flow of pedestrians.

Sidewalk cafes should be located back from intersections where pedestrians tend to queue up before crossing the street. The placement of defined seating space should leave ample room for pedestrians to pass by.



The trash receptacle typically found in Lower Downtown. *MacLennan 1991*

## Trash Receptacles

The standard trash receptacle, pictured above, is of the same style and color as the bench. The most efficient placement of trash receptacles is on diagonal corners at each intersection where they can be used by the largest number of pedestrians.

Property owners are encouraged to add trash receptacles if the land

use, such as a take-out food service, creates a need for them. Property owners who place trash receptacles on the sidewalk are responsible for maintaining and emptying them. However, if a maintenance district were formed, trash pick-up could be handled by the district.



This bicycle rack at Larimer Square fits the character of the area well, and is the preferred design for Lower Downtown. *Leese 1991*

## Bicycle Parking

Where needed, bicycle racks may be installed. These should be firmly attached to the sidewalk. Racks that are simply placed on the sidewalk and not attached to it are not allowed. One type that is recommended is known as a "ribbon rack". These should be painted federal green to match other street furnishings.



This bicycle rack does not fit into the area as well, but is a good alternative. *Leese 1970*



Parking lot railing at 17th Street and Wazee.

*Leese 1991*

**Railings**

Owners of new parking lots must install railings along the perimeter of their lots. The railings should be painted federal green and the design should be similar to the style found throughout Lower Downtown. For additional detail, refer to the "Rules and Regulations for the Landscaping of Parking



Railing at the Oxford Hotel annex.

*Leese 1991*



Railing at the Market Center, the father of the parking lot, Auraria Parkway and Speer Viaduct railings.

*Leese 1991*

Areas" available through the Transportation Division of the Department of Public Works.

Owners of existing parking lots are encouraged to install railings so that they conform to the developing streetscape. There is a tradition of metal pole or wrought iron railings of varying designs throughout Lower Downtown. The Auraria Parkway and the Speer Viaduct railings are two examples. The important aspect of these new railings is that they fall within the "family" of Lower Downtown railing designs. Brick piers or walls may also be incorporated.

**Newspaper Vending Boxes**

Newspaper boxes should be placed so that they do not interfere with pedestrian circulation - back from the intersection and out of the pedestrian travel path.

They should not distract from the historic streetscape and never be attached to the street light fixtures. Where a number of them are needed at a single location, they should be consolidated into a single array of boxes stacked two high. They should be painted federal green and of the design pictured.



A standard newspaper vending box for use in Lower Downtown.

*Leese 1990*



The "cherub" fountain is very distinctive and contributes to the sense of place in Larimer Square. *Leese 1991*

### Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains are appropriate in public spaces throughout Lower Downtown and at the edge of the sidewalk in high use areas. Decorative drinking fountains can be both an attractive and useful streetscape element. Larimer Square's cherub fountain provides

a good example of a drinking fountain that is both decorative and functional. While this is an historic drinking fountain, new fountains could be designed that fit into the historic character. Designs will be reviewed by the Lower Downtown Design Review Board.



This fountain in San Antonio would fit well into Lower Downtown. It is handicapped accessible and could be modified to fit into Lower Downtown. *Leese 1990*

### Bollards

Bollards (or railings) may be used where it is desirable to protect pedestrians or special features from automobiles and to indicate to pedestrians that they should exercise caution. They are also useful to emphasize a special feature (such as a pathway or artwork) with lighting. Bollards used in Lower Downtown should be made of metal and designed in keeping with the other streetscape elements. Details for bollard design can be obtained from the Office of Planning and Community Development.



A bollard design that fits in well with the character of the District. *Brown 1991*

### Directories

The City is in the process of creating a system of directories for use within the Downtown. They will have the same functional requirements as those currently in use on the 16th Street Mall, but be designed to fit in with the historic streetscape of Lower Downtown. The directories will have a map, a place for posters or notices, and pockets for brochures and walking tour maps.

Directories will be placed so that they supplement the Downtown Guide Sign system and direct pedestrians throughout Lower Downtown.

---

# HISTORIC INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

## HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Appreciation for Lower Downtown as the birthplace of Denver will grow as people become more aware of specific aspects of its history. The historic buildings in the District become the stage for explaining not only architectural development, but also important events and people who made Denver what it is today.

With the Denver Landmark Commission's designation of Lower Downtown as an Historic District, informational plaques were installed as part of the Lower Downtown Streetscape Project. The eight cast bronze plaques describe sub-areas and aspects of the District's history, such as the role of the railroad and warehouses.

## I N T E R N E T

The history of Denver should continue to be interpreted through Lower Downtown - its birthplace.

Informational plaque systems and walking tours have proven successful in historic districts throughout the country. They give tourists and residents an opportunity to discover the cultural, architectural, and historical roots of the city. "Telling the story" of Lower Downtown through an organized plaque system will help Denverites and tourists understand the District's value and the need to protect this irreplaceable community resource.



The trolley in Lower Downtown (date unknown) *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*

# GUIDELINES

## Plaques

Lower Downtown's informational plaque system will have three components:

- **area plaques** that describe architectural building types, events, and historical influences in a specific sub-area;
- **building plaques** for individual buildings that contribute to the character of the area, have unique architectural features, or are the location of an historically significant event; and
- **numbered walking tour plaques** (similar to those in Larimer Square) that are part of a larger system that extends throughout Downtown.

Buildings may have one, two or three of these plaques in any combination. Dimensional guidelines for their placement are shown in the illustration below. They should be placed on the building so that they are easily

visible and set within the architectural frame of the building facade near a door or centered on a column.

The color-coded ceramic numbers will be provided by the City as the walking tours for Downtown and Lower Downtown are developed.

Eight area plaques have been provided by the City as part of the 1989 Lower Downtown Streetscape Project and more may be added in the future. They describe the histories of the sub areas where they are located.

The building plaques will be provided by individual owners. Generally, they will be made of cast bronze, twelve inches square with a one-half inch border, and mounted to the building. Detailed plaque manufacturing specifications are available through the Office of Planning and Community Development. Some flexibility will be allowed to tailor the plaque to the individual building.

Whenever possible or applicable,

the following information will be included on the building plaque:

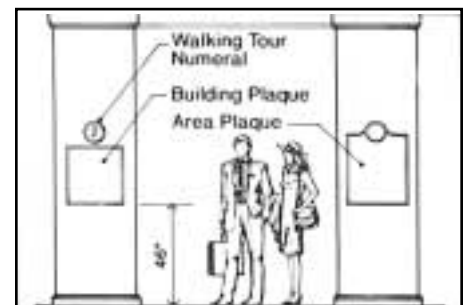
- Building name
- Date of construction and architect
- Original building use, later uses, and dates of restoration
- Description of distinguishing building characteristics, important events that took place in or near the building, important historical figures associated with the building, or other unique information

Plaque placement and content must be reviewed and approved by the Lower Downtown Design Review Board, a subcommittee of the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission, and the Colorado Historical Society. Contact the Office of Planning and Community Development to initiate the approval process.

*Left: The Union Station area plaque. MacLennan 1991*

*Right: A numbered walking tour plaque. Leese 1991*

*Below Right: Illustration of the three types of plaques showing their placement. Brown*



# A R T

## HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Even though Lower Downtown was historically a "working district", it has had a tradition of public art since the early days. Most notable was the Welcome Arch built in 1906. The seventy-ton bronzed steel arch was eighty-six feet wide and spanned 17th Street lighting it up with 2,194 bulbs. The arch stood in front of Union Station from the turn of the century to the 1930's when it was removed because it interfered with automobile traffic. The spirit of the welcome arch is recalled in the

gateway monuments at the intersections along the District's boundaries.

More recently, two pieces of free standing art by artist Kevin Oehler - more modern in style - have been added: Jade Spire at 17th and Blake and Union Spire at 14th and Wynkoop. Interest in public art in Lower Downtown is increasing as the district is revitalized.

## I N T E N T

Public art is fundamental to a human environment. The art should be approachable, memorable, and reinforce the District's character.



Denver Union Terminal Welcome Arch

*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*



"Jade Spire" by artist Kevin Oehler at 17th and Blake Streets.  
*Leese 1991*

---

# GUIDELINES

## Materials

Public art should be constructed of durable materials. It is important to consider how these materials will react to atmospheric conditions, freeze-thaw cycles, exposure to water, ice, salt, and pollution.

Beyond the potentially damaging natural elements, vandalism should be considered. Use of fragile materials or a design that encourages defacement is discouraged.

## Placement

Art should be sited so that it complements and fits in with the surrounding environment. Artwork located along the street should generally be "human" in scale. There are a few locations in the District, however, where monumental pieces may be appropriate.

Artwork should be purposefully placed to define and shape space, terminate a vista, or serve as a focal point.

Free-standing art or sculpture should not be placed where it would compete with a storefront, obstruct a pedestrian path, create a traffic hazard, or compete with other artwork.

Murals could be used to enliven otherwise blank walls by creating interest and color.

## Art Themes

Public art in Lower Downtown should convey richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning. It should be engaging and pro-

vocative, not confrontational. Art should be diverse, ambiguous, and inclusive. It's characteristics should include some of the following qualities:

- ABSTRACT
- TOTEMIC
- INSTRUCTIONAL
- CELEBRATORY
- NARRATIVE
- ANECDOTAL

Public art in Lower Downtown may also have anthropomorphic, metaphysical, metaphorical, mystical, sociological, mythical, morphological, ritualistic, or psychological implications.

## Lighting

Lighting the art is a critical design issue from the point of view of security, spotlighting, shadows, and safety.

## Maintenance

Long-term maintenance costs should be considered. It is important to provide a budget, schedule, and specifications for maintenance.

## Construction

Structural considerations, joints, and attachment to the ground are critical considerations for public art. These details should be both functional and aesthetically pleasing.



"Union Spire" by artist Kevin Oehler at 14th and Wazee Streets.

Leese 1991

# LANDSCAPING

## HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Rows of street trees were not a part of the street scene during Lower Downtown's historic past. The area was a working district busy with rail cars, warehouse, and retail activities. Trees were difficult to introduce into these environments, and were not seen as a priority in Denver's growing downtown.

Today, Lower Downtown is home to small offices, entertainment centers, designers, artists, and a growing number of residential projects.



Trees and other decorative plantings are significant because they provide functional, aesthetic and environmental benefits.

## I N T E N T

Trees are significant elements which can unify a commercial street's appearance. Moreover, formal repetitive use of trees creates a space which is scaled to the pedestrian at the level of the retail facade.

In Lower Downtown, trees can also be used to soften the appearance of visually distracting non-historic buildings and parking facilities that do not

contribute to the character of the District.

Trees also enhance the street's appearance by helping to define the sidewalk, channeling circulation, and serving as a buffer between the sidewalk and the street. Also, seasonal changes offer year round variety to the city.

Street trees can:

- supply shade and greenery;
- furnish screening from wind and sun;
- provide air purification; and
- control glare and reflection.

Landscaping in Lower Downtown will be further enhanced by the use of seasonal flower displays in planter pots. These plantings add not only color, but also that special quality of a place that is well cared for and nurtured.



*Inset: Looking down 17th Street at the Denver Union Terminal. MacLennan 1991  
Below: Market Street ( date unknown ) Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department*



---

## GUIDELINES

The purpose of this section is to provide specific recommendations and requirements established by the City Forester's Office, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Office of Planning and Community Development and the Transportation Division to ensure unified and consistent streetscape design in all future public right-of-way projects within Lower Downtown. These recommendations do not supercede the requirements established by those agencies.

### General Placement

The sidewalks and public spaces in Lower Downtown can be further enhanced by the use of street trees. Street trees should be selected and placed to enhance the walking experience without

creating hazards. A clear walking zone of at least 10 feet must exist between the trees and buildings.

### Tree Selection

Tree species selection involves understanding the specific design issues of the site and reviewing recommended species for street trees in the Denver area.

All plant materials should be suited to the climate, soil type, and environment in which they are planted. This is a major concern in areas with high levels of pollution, salt, snow storage, and automobile and pedestrian damage. The selection of trees for Lower Downtown should be based on their ability to endure these stressful conditions.

Trees should be strong, resistant to most diseases and insects (or

easily treatable), and require little maintenance. They should be single trunked, upright, produce a minimal amount of fruit and seeds and have a medium to long life expectancy. Branches should not break easily.

Trees should be deep rooted to avoid heaving of the sidewalk and/or curb. Trees which have large roots on the surface, such as some varieties of Norway Maple, should be used only in special conditions. Root restricting rings and pits are not recommended. Plant materials and irrigation techniques that require less water should be considered. However, unless a special permit for a dry well is obtained from the City Forester, irrigation is required.

### Tree Size

Trees planted in the public right-



The southeast side of Wazee between 14th and 15th Streets.  
*Leese 1991*

of-way in Lower Downtown should be large enough at the time of planting to add substantial greenery and shade to the street. Street trees should be 3 inch caliper, minimum. The height of street trees at maturity should be appropriate to the height of buildings on the street, with consideration given to the fact that these trees will never reach their "normal" mature height because of their placement in a sidewalk. Ideally, all the trees on a given street or at least on a given block will be of the same species, or at least similar in height and shape.

The branching height of mature trees on the traffic side of the sidewalk should be no less than 12 feet above the street. Select tree species that will satisfy this guideline when mature.

The branching height of mature trees on the pedestrian side of the street should be no less than 8 feet above the sidewalk when the tree is planted within 10 feet of the walking area. Minimum branching height for young, immature trees is negotiable. Reasonable judgment should be used when pruning young trees to allow for pedestrian safety.

**Tree Location**

The eventual size and shape of each tree planted should be carefully considered before planting so that each tree will be allowed the room needed to achieve its mature size and shape. Species or location may need to be adjusted to accommodate public amenities such as traffic, street signs and lights, awnings or canopies, overhead or



The northeast side of 17th Street between Wazee and Wynkoop. *Leese 1991*

underground utilities, utility poles and fire hydrants.

Generally, place trees so that their trunks make a straight line along the street side even if the width of the pedestrian area between the building and the curb varies. Relate placement to the architecture, block patterns, curb cuts, and building entries, adjusting as required. Try to relate

tree locations to the architecture of adjacent buildings (unless the architecture or lack thereof dictates a ragged pattern). The street will appear neater if the trees appear regularly spaced in straight rows.

Tree spacing depends on existing site conditions as well as proposed design intent. Trees should be planted at 30 to 40 feet intervals along the street frontage for most species. Reduced spacing may be desirable or appropriate depending on the space available and proposed species or variety. Review spacing requirements with the City Forester.

Trees should not be planted closer than 20 feet from the projected property line at all intersections and street corners in order to maintain a visually clear zone.



Southwest side of 14th Street between Blake and Market Streets.

*Leese 1991*

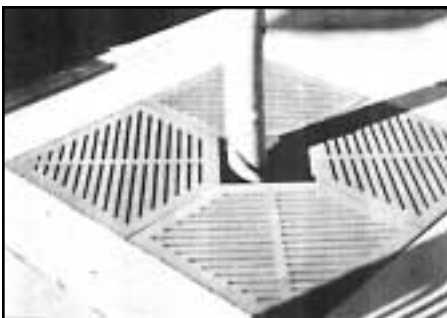


A flagstone tree well cover on 14th Street.  
*MacIenman 1991*

This minimum may be reduced depending upon existing site conditions and upon review by the Transportation Division.

To maintain clear visibility along the curb edge, trees should be located a minimum of 36 inches from the face of the nearest curb (flow line) and a minimum of 5 feet from the apron of the nearest drive or alley.

Generally, trees should be located 25 feet from the nearest utility pole or street light. This dimension can be adjusted for smaller tree species and special site conditions. Trees will generally not reach their ultimate expected size whenever they are surrounded by paving, and these minimums may be reduced. Contact the City Forester and the Public Service Company to review special conditions.



A cast iron tree grate on Larimer Street.  
*MacIenman 1991*

### Tree Grates & Wells

Tree grates and tree wells are an attractive way to allow street trees to be planted in a paved environment. They also prevent soil compaction around trees in higher volume pedestrian areas. Other options such as modular blocks, uni-stone, brick pavers and flagstone may be considered if conditions warrant.



A precast concrete flower pot on Blake Street.  
*Leese 1991*

Tree grates or flagstone on steel frames are the recommended methods for tree planting in sidewalks. Open tree grates should be at least 5 ft. x 5 ft. with slots no more than 1/4 inch in width. Size and shape of tree grates should relate to the paving pattern. Tree grates should be designed to allow for tree trunk growth and be constructed of ductile iron.

Irrigation systems within grates are required by the City of Denver. Proposed irrigation systems should be reviewed with the City Forester. Irrigation systems must be on a zone separate from all other landscape zones.



Terra cotta flower pots on Larimer Square.  
*Leese 1991*

Dry wells, trees without irrigation, may be installed. A special permit from the City Forester is required. However, to ensure proper long-term maintenance as property ownerships change, automatic irrigation systems are recommended.

### Planter Pots

Planting pots should be planted with annual flowers for seasonal display or with evergreen or deciduous ground covers. Pots should occupy a surface area of at least two square feet and not block other elements such as streets, signs, meters, street lights.

Large, free-standing planting pots, like those used in the 1989 Streetscape design in front of the Barth Hotel, are the preferred style. They should be well maintained and watered to achieve the best results.



A precast concrete flowerpot on Larimer Square.  
*Leese 1991*

---

## RECOMMENDED STREET TREES

The street trees recommended below are species that best meet the tree selection and size guidelines above. Tree species other than those listed must be specifically approved for street tree planting by the Deputy Director of Maintenance of the Department of Parks and Recreation and the City Forester.

The species listed are preferred for their dependability, low maintenance and drought resistance unless otherwise noted. The City Forester may consider other species where special conditions exist.

It should be noted that columnar shaped trees are perhaps the best at fitting into the urban environment where narrow sidewalks and awnings restrict the growth of a larger canopy.

Leaf size should also be considered when selecting tree species. Smaller leafed, spreading forms allow better visibility to building facades and signage. Smaller leaves generally are dispersed by the wind and require less fall cleanup.



Ash: West side of Broadway at Bayaud, looking north.

Brown 1991

### Ash

(*Fraxinus americana* cv., and *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* cv.)

Mature Form:	Oval
Mature Height:	40-60 feet
Spacing, Tree Lawn:	35-40 feet
Spacing, Grates:	25-30 feet
Growth Rate:	Moderate/Rapid
Root System:	Deep

#### **Special Characteristics:**

Generally, dark green, shiny foliage. Withstands extremes in soil; tolerates salt, drought. Susceptible to borers and scale. F.a. 'Autumn Purple' and 'Rose Hill' - maroon fall color. F.p. lanceolata - very hardy with small winged seeds. F.p. 'Marshall's Seedless' - naturally seedless variety. F.p. 'Summit' - more upright and columnar in form.



Summit Ash, *F. pennsylvanica* 'Summit'  
Courtesy Schichtel's Nursery



Columnar or Fastigiata English Oak: Tennyson Terrace, 3900 Tennyson Street. *Brown 1991*



Hackberry: State Capital, west side of 1400 block of Grant Street looking south. *Brown 1991*

**Columnar English Oak**  
(*Quercus robur 'Fastigiata'*)

Mature Form:	Columnar
Mature Height:	50 feet
Spacing, Tree Lawn:	25-30 feet
Spacing, Grates:	20-25 feet
Growth Rate:	Moderate
Root System:	Deep

**Special Characteristics:**

Dark green large leaf in summer, brown in fall, persisting through winter; small acorn. Prefers well-drained soils. Vulnerable to mildew.

**Common Hackberry**  
(*Celtis occidentalis*)

Mature Form:	Oval
Mature Height:	50-60 feet
Spacing, Tree Lawn:	40-45 feet
Spacing, Grates:	30-35 feet
Growth Rate:	Moderate/Rapid
Root System:	Deep

**Special Characteristics:**

Medium green leaves in summer, yellow to orange-red to purple leaves in fall; corky bark. Prefers rich, moist soil but grows in all soil types; tolerates wind and air pollution. Susceptible to leaf spots, witch's broom, powdery mildew, nipple gall and several scales which all cause leaf and branching abnormalities.



Hackberry branching structure. *Courtesy Schichtel's Nursery*



Columnar Hornbeam: Tennyson Terrace, 3900 block of Tennyson Street  
*Brown 1991*



Redmond Linden: Denver Permit Center, west side of 1300 block of Bannock looking south.

*Brown 1991*

## Columnar Hornbeam

*(Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata')*

Mature Form:	Columnar
Mature Height:	30-40 feet
Spacing, Tree Lawn:	15-30 feet
Spacing, Grates:	15-30 feet
Growth Rate:	Slow
Root System:	Deep

### **Special Characteristics:**

Dark green, sharply toothed leaves in summer, yellow fall color, smooth gray bark. Fruit forms in nuike, drooping clusters. A narrow columnar form becoming more pyramidal in maturity with very dense branching.

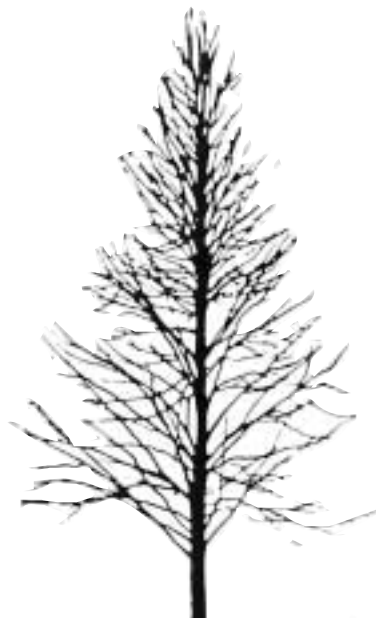
## Redmond Linden

*(tilia x euchlora 'Redmond')*

Mature Form:	Pyramidal
Mature Height:	45-50 feet
Spacing, Tree Lawn:	30-35 feet
Spacing, Grates:	25-30 feet
Growth Rate:	Moderate
Root System:	Deep

### **Special Characteristics:**

Dense, pyramidal form with ascending branches; large dark green leaves, less glossy than other lindens. Prefers moist fertile soils but will tolerate dry, heavy soils. Susceptible to aphids, borers and mites



Ascending branch structure and narrow form make the Redmond Linden an excellent street tree.

*Courtesy Schichtel's Nursery*



Columnar Norway Maple: Larimer Square, west side of 1400 block of Larimer Street looking southwest.  
Brown 1991

## Columnar Norway Maple

(*Acer platanoides* 'Columnar')

Mature Form:	Columnar
Mature Height:	50-60 feet
Spacing, Tree Lawn:	30-35 feet
Spacing, Grates:	25-30 feet
Growth Rate:	Moderate/Rapid
Root System:	Shallow

### **Special Characteristics:**

Dark green leaves in summer, yellow leaves in fall. Tolerates air pollution; withstands extremes in soils. Susceptible to aphids and sun scald.



Columnar Norway Maple A.P.'C', narrow columnar form allows visual penetration between trees.  
Courtesy Schichtel's Nursery

## TREES NOT RECOMMENDED

Trees with large amounts of fruit or flowers should not be planted as street trees: catalpa, tree of heaven, Kentucky coffee tree, and cottonbearing cotton-wood, among others. Trees with marginal success in this area should not be planted as street trees: Ohio buckeye, sycamore and pin oak among others. Small trees under 35 feet should not be planted as street trees: golden rain tree, flowering crab apples, and bradford pear, among others.

### **Trees Not Allowed**

Unless specifically authorized by the Manager of Parks and Recreation, the following species and types of trees and woody plants are prohibited from being planted in the street right-of-ways of Denver.

1. Any of the poplar species (*Populus sp.*)
2. Any of the willow species (*Salix sp.*)
3. The box elder tree (*Acer negundo*)
4. The Siberian (Chinese) elm (*Ulmus Pumila*)
5. The silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*)
6. Any weeping or pendulous type tree
7. Any tree with bushy growth habit which cannot be maintained to a single leader or trunk.
8. Any shrub or hedge growth which by its habit of growth would obstruct, restrict, or conflict with the necessary and safe use of the public right-of-way.
9. Artificial trees, shrubs, turf or plants.

---

# A P P E N D I X

---

BY AUTHORITY  
ORDINANCE NO. 109  
SERIES OF 1988  
AS AMENDED 2/29/88

COUNCIL BILL NO. 68  
COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE  
ZONING, PLANNING  
& LAND USE

## *A BILL*

### FOR AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE LOWER DOWNTOWN AS A DISTRICT FOR PRESERVATION AND TO ADOPT DESIGN STANDARDS, A DESIGN CONSULTATION PROCESS AND DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS

**W**HEREAS, the Preservation Commission has transmitted to the Council a proposed designation of a district for preservation; and WHEREAS, the Planning Board has approved the same; and WHEREAS, the Lower Downtown has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characterization of the city, state and nation, representing three eras of Denver's development and the impact of the railroad on growth in the west; is the site of an historic event with an effect upon society, being the birthplace of Denver; is identified with a group of persons who had some influence on society, being associated with Denver's first pioneers, founders and entrepreneurs, such as General William Larimer, John Evans, William Byers, David Moffat and Bella Hughes, exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social and historical heritage of the community, being the last cohesive collection of commercial buildings representative of Denver's growth as the region's commercial, industrial, social and political center; portrays the environment of a group of people in an area of history characterized by a distinctive architectural-type specimen, representing two eras of commercial architecture; contains the works of the architects or master-builders whose individual work influenced the development of the City, including Frank Edbrooke, Aaron Gove, Thomas Walsh, Robert Willison, Montana Fallis, E.P. Eberly, F. Goodnow, J.J. Huddart, W.M. Quale, The Baerreson Brothers, and A.M. Stuckert; and is a distinctive area, being the last remaining collection of cohesive historic commercial buildings in the downtown, and should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on an historic, cultural and architectural motif.

**N**OW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

**SECTION 1.** THAT CERTAIN PROPERTY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, TOGETHER WITH ALL IMPROVEMENTS SITUATED AND LOCATED THEREON, BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY DESIGNATED AS A DISTRICT FOR PRESERVATION:

All of Blocks A and B, all of Blocks 12, 13, and 15 through 23, all of Blocks 38 through 44; Lots 1 through 16 of Blocks 45 through 50, East Denver; All of Blocks 240, 241 and 242, West Denver; And all subdivision and resubdivisions thereof; and all vacated streets and alleys within or adjacent to the afore described areas; And including all dedicated streets and alleys within or adjacent to the afore described areas;

**SECTION 2.** MINIMUM DESIGN GUIDELINES.

(a) The purpose of minimum design guidelines is to encourage and allow development compatible with the existing historic character of the Lower Downtown in conjunction with the building permit review process.

(b) The following conditions must be met before a zoning or building permit may be issued in the Historic District, unless the proposed development meets the exemption provisions hereinafter provided for or an exception is granted by the Design Consultation Board:



- (1) Fenestration and Articulation.
- a. The rhythm and vertical proportion established by the historic context and the existing street frontage in the vicinity of the site must be maintained;
  - b. Windows must be punched (set in) at least one (1) brick width;
  - c. Sills and lintels must be articulated through color, materials, ornamentation or other means;
  - d. Each floor must be articulated;
  - e. Street facades must reflect the historical development pattern of the area, generally two to four lots; and
  - f. Ground level space in multi-lot developments must keep entrances on each street frontage and entrances must occur in each two to four lot facade.

- (2) Setbacks and Rooflines.
- a. At the first two stories in the structure must be built to the property line or lines which are adjacent to a street;
  - b. Buildings over 60 feet in height must be set back at least 15 feet along the front zone lot line which is part of the long dimension of any block at a level between 20 feet and 60 feet above grade and at a level equal to or slightly higher or lower than adjacent buildings; and
  - c. Building height may not exceed 85 feet without design consultation as hereinafter provided excluding the current provisions for heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment.

- (3) Exterior Materials.
- a. Materials must be in context with the color, proportion and scale of existing historic patterns, such as brick and sandstone, iron storefronts, vertical windows and doorways; and
  - b. Black, bronze and 100 percent reflective glass are not permitted.

(4) Existing Industrial Uses.  
 Exterior alterations required for the continued operation of existing industrial, including but not limited to manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, and wholesaling uses are permitted through review under these design guidelines.

**SECTION 3. DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS.**

**(a)** The design review process shall be as follows:

(1) A pre-application conference with the Planning Office is required prior to application for any zoning permit and/or any

building permit, PUD District or zoning variance with respect to property in the Historic District.

- a. The purpose of the pre-application conference is to inform the applicant of relevant city policies, regulations and procedures, to review the minimum design guidelines for the Historic District and to review preliminarily whether the proposed development, alteration/renovation or additional will comply with the guidelines; and
- b. The pre-application conference will be held with the Planning Director or his designated representative from the Planning Office, and the applicant, developer, architect or other designated representative of the proposed development; and
- c. A review by the Design Consultation Board may be scheduled at the pre-application conference. If review by the Design Consultation Board is desired at this time, the requirements of the design review process shall apply unless review under the Design consultation criteria is specifically requested except that a zoning permit and/or building permit may not be applied for, nor accepted, even though a pre-application conference has been conducted.

(2) A zoning and/or building permit may be applied for after the pre-application conference; provided, however, no zoning or building permit may be issued with respect to the Historic District until approved by the Planning Office.

(3) All zoning and/or building permit applications with respect to the Historic District must be reviewed and approved for compliance with the minimum design guidelines or eligibility for exemption from the guidelines by the Planning Office. Such application shall include 8" by 10" photographs of the face block and the application requirements of subsection 3.b(5) of this ordinance.

- a. The Planning Office review will be on an as needed basis, to be completed within the standard review procedures for zoning and/or building permits;
- b. The application will be reviewed by the Planning Director, or his designated representative from the Planning Office, and two members of the Design Consultation Board;
- c. If approved the zoning and/or building permit may be issued; and
- d. If disapproved, the applicant may modify the application to comply with the guidelines or request that the decision of the Planning Office be reviewed by the Design Consultation Board.

**(b)** Building and/or zoning permit applications which meet any one of the following conditions are exempted from the

---

minimum design guidelines and design consultation provisions:

- (1) Existing buildings which have received a variance from the Board of Adjustment-Zoning for a specific building renovation plan prior to the adoption of this ordinance;
- (2) Buildings or developments for which a building permit has been issued prior to the adoption of the amendments to the B-7 zoning district;
- (3) Applications for a building or zoning permit to authorize work not involving any changes to or work upon the exterior facade of a building; and
- (4) Proposed development projects which have received approval for the vacation of air rights over alleys in conjunction with a specific development plan for use and architectural design prior to the adoption of this ordinance except that design changes may be authorized by the design consultation board for adjacent parcels which include the use of the air rights in the development. This exemption provision will expire five (5) years from the effective date of the adoption of these provisions unless a building permit has been issued and is active.

#### **SECTION 4. DESIGN CONSULTATION BOARD**

**(a)** The design consultation process shall be as follows:

- (1) Design Consultation may be requested by the applicant, recommended by the Planning Office or triggered upon the request by the applicant upon a disapproval of a project reviewed under the minimum design guidelines by the Planning Office that the disapproval be reviewed by the Design Consultation Board.
- (2) The Design Consultation Board is authorized to review appeals of a disapproval of a zoning permit for non-compliance with the minimum design guidelines and applications for the design consultation process.
  - a. The Design Consultation Board may approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the review or the application;
  - b. If disapproved, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Landmark Preservation Commission. Appeals shall be made within 30 days of the date of the Design Consultation Board's hearing. The Landmark Preservation Commission shall act on the appeal within 60 days of its receipt in the Planning Office; and

c. Upon arrival, the applicant may apply for a zoning and/or building permit.

(3) The Design Consultation Board will review the completed application or an appeal of a disapproval within 25 days of its receipt in the Planning Office. If no action is taken within 25 days then the application shall be deemed to be approved unless the review period is extended by mutual agreement of the applicant and the Board.

(4) At least 15 days before the review, the property will be posted indicating the date, time and place of the design consultation review.

(5) At least 10 days before the review, written notice of the review will be mailed to the property owners except the applicant.

**(b)** The criteria for the design consultation process by the Design Consultation Board shall be as follows:

- (1) The purpose of the design consultation process is to protect, enhance, and perpetuate buildings, sites, and areas of the Historic District reminiscent of past areas, events, and persons important in local, state, or national history; to encourage rehabilitation of contributing buildings and new construction compatible with contributing buildings; to provide significant examples of architectural styles of the past and to develop and maintain appropriate settings and environments for such buildings, sites, and areas to enhance property values, stabilize neighborhoods, promote economic development, job creation, tourist trade, and foster knowledge of the city's living heritage;
- (2) The design consultation process is intended to draw a reasonable balance between private property rights and the public interest in preserving the cultural, historic, and architectural heritage of the Historic District by providing property owners the opportunity to retain the benefits of property ownership through rehabilitation or alteration of existing buildings or the construction of new buildings which are architecturally compatible with the heritage of the district, ensuring that renovation, rehabilitation, or alteration of buildings and structures contributing to that heritage will be carefully weighted with other alternatives and the economic feasibility of renovation and re-use, and that alterations to such buildings and structures and new construction will respect the character of the District, not by imitating surrounding structures, but by being

---

compatible with them to the extent economically feasible.

(3) In the case of an appeal, the Board will review the appeal in accordance with the minimum design guidelines. At the request of the applicant, an appeal may be reviewed as a regular design consultation application; and

(4) In the case of an application for design consultation, the Board will review the application in accordance with the purposes of the B-7 District, and the design consultation process, and the following guidelines:

a. If the proposed work is related to renovation or rehabilitation of a contributing building, the proposed work preserves, enhances or restores and does not damage or destroy the exterior architectural features building;

b. The proposed work does not adversely affect the special character or special historical, architectural features of the property, and/or the District;

c. The architectural style, massing, texture, scale, color, arrangement of color, and materials used on existing and proposed structures are compatible with the character of the District;

d. The building does not exceed 130 feet in height excluding cornices and current regulations for HVAC equipment. A building between 85 feet and 130 feet may not be denied solely on the basis of height.

e. For buildings greater than 85 feet in height, that portion of the building over 85 feet is setback at least 25 feet along the front zone lot line which is part of the longer dimension of any block; and

f. Contemporary design for additions, alterations, and new construction is not discouraged, and is recognized as an important element in the evolution of individual buildings as well as the district as a whole.

(5) Applications for design consultation shall provide conceptual plans and evaluations with enough detail to evaluate height, massing, setback, materials, fenestration, orientation to the street, and relationship to adjacent buildings. For alterations to existing buildings, such plans shall show the effect of the alteration on the existing facade. The Design Consultation Board in conjunction with the Landmark Preservation Commission shall establish the submittal requirements for an application by rule and regulation. Such application shall be filed with the Planning Office upon forms prescribed by the Design Consultation Board.

## **SECTION 5. DESIGN CONSULTATION BOARD.**

(a) There shall be and is hereby created a Design Consultation Board which shall consist of 5 members. The 5 members of the Board shall be appointed by the Mayor from nominations from the following organizations or their successors; The lower downtown property owners, nominated jointly by the Development Association of Lower Downtown and the Lower Downtown Property Owners Association and such other property owner group representing Lower Downtown, registered with the Planning Office and designated by the Landmark Preservation Commission; the lower downtown residents or business owners, nominated jointly by the Downtown Residents Organization and Downtown Denver, Inc. and such other resident or business organization representing Lower Downtown, registered with the Planning Office and designated by the Landmark Preservation Commission and who must reside or own a business in Lower Downtown; the Denver Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; a developer, nominated by the district council member, with experience in the rehabilitation of commercial or residential projects similar in scale to the buildings in lower downtown; and one member to appointed from the Landmark Preservation Commission. Each organization shall nominate three persons, and one of which shall be appointed. The appointments shall be made upon recommendation of the Landmark Preservation Commission by the Mayor with consideration in maintaining a balance of interests and skills, and with consideration of the individual qualifications of the candidates including their training, experience, knowledge or interest in architecture, urban design, real estate, financial analysis, rehabilitation/renovation, preservation or redevelopment;

(b) Each member of the Board (except the first members hereinafter specifically provided for) shall serve a term of 5 years and may be removed only for cause upon written charges. The first members of the Board shall be appointed for terms of one, two and three years, respectively, as designated by the Mayor in the order of appointment. As their terms respectively expire, the appointment shall be for a full term of five years. Vacancies shall be filled by the Mayor for the unexpired term of any member whose term becomes vacant; and

(c) A concurring vote of a majority of the Board shall be necessary to decide in favor of the applicant on any matter upon which the Board is required to pass.

---

**(d)** The board shall by rule and regulation establish a designated pool of no less than 10 persons composed of those individuals nominated but not appointed in a given year. The applicant may select two advisors without voting powers.

**SECTION 6. DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS.**

**(a)** The demolition review process shall be as follows:

(1) No demolition permit may be issued in the District unless reviewed and approved by the Demolition Review Board, or unless exempted as hereinafter provided.

(2) Demolition review applies only to those buildings established as "Contributing structures" as shown by the cross hatching on Exhibit A filed in the Office of the Clerk and Recorder, Ex-Officio Clerk of the City and County of Denver, on the 28th day of January 1988, Filing Number 88-080.

(3) The Demolition Review Board will review the completed application at a public hearing within 25 days of its receipt in the Planning Office. If no action is taken within 25 days then the application shall be deemed to be approved unless the review period is extended by mutual agreement of the applicant and the Board.

(4) At least fifteen days before the public hearing, the property will be posted indicating the date, time and place of the hearing.

(5) The Demolition Review Board is authorized to review demolition permits and redevelopment plans. Except as provided in subsection (6) below, no demolition permit may be issued unless redevelopment plans are submitted and approved in conjunction with the demolition review application and any other applicable review processes, and in conjunction with the issuance of a building permit.

a. A demolition review may be requested at any time and may be completed prior to making an application for a building permit provided that post-demolition plans are considered as part of the demolition review.

b. Post-demolition plans shall include, but are not limited to drawings or sketches with sufficient detail to show the exterior appearance and architectural design of the proposed building or use; but does not require construction documents to be completed.

c. The Demolition Review Board may authorize a building for demolition based on such post-demolition plans and

compliance with the demolition review criteria. Such authorization shall be valid for two years from the date of the authorization.

d. A demolition permit shall be issued upon the issuance of a building permit based on the post-demolition plans as previously reviewed and approved, or upon a determination that the building to be demolished is imminently dangerous to life, health or property by the Building Inspection Division, the Department of Health and Hospitals or the Fire Department and upon notification of such determination to the Demolition Review Board.

(6) The Landmark Preservation Commission shall grant relief if the owner establishes that the enforcement of the requirement that a building permit be issued in conjunction with a demolition permit as provided for in subsection (5) above would deny all economically viable use of property.

(7) The Board may approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the demolition permit application and redevelopment plans.

(8) If disapproved, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Landmark Preservation Commission. Appeals shall be made within 30 days of the date of the Demolition Review Board's hearing. The Landmark preservation Commission must act on the appeal within 60 days of the date of its receipt in the Planning Office.

(9) Upon approval, the applicant may apply for the demolition permit.

(10) Approval of the redevelopment plans in conjunction with a demolition permit constitutes approval as though reviewed under the design consultation process.

**(b)** The Demolition Review Board shall consider the following factors in making a determination on a request for a demolition permit:

(1) Significant economic hardship to the property owner based on subsection (a) below;

(2) Significant hardship to the public interest based on subsection (b) below;

(3) Extent to which reuse or proposed redevelopment implements the goals of the Downtown Area Plan and the purposes of this district.

- a. Economic Factors
    - 1. Structural condition of the building and practicality of rehabilitation and reuse;
    - 2. Determination of economic hardship based on a comparison of i. and ii. below;
      - i. Economic feasibility of rehabilitation and reuse of the structure.
      - ii. Economic feasibility of the proposed redevelopment plans.
      - iii. This comparison must establish as a base line the property as it is and what value the property contributes to either i. or ii. above.
  - b. Preservation Factors
    - 1. Age of building.
    - 2. Architectural and historic significance of the building as related to the district.
    - 3. Extent to which the structure maintains the continuity, scale and massing of adjacent contributing structures, and prominence of structure within the block.
  - c. Demonstration of Proof and Authority
    - 1. The burden of proof of economic hardship is the responsibility of the property owner.
    - 2. The decision of the Demolition Review Board shall prevail.
    - 3. Appeals are permitted to the Landmark Preservation Commission.
- (4) Applications for demolition review shall include, but are not limited to valuation of the property, estimates of the costs and income for rehabilitation of the building, estimates of the costs and income for new development, preliminary development plans, and reports as to the condition of the building prepared by professionals with experience in preservation and rehabilitation. The Demolition Review Board in conjunction with the Landmark Preservation Commission shall establish the submittal requirements for an application by rule and regulation. Such application shall be filed with the Planning Office upon forms prescribed by the Demolition Review Board.

**Section 7. CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS**

(a) Contributing buildings are hereby established as indicated on the map contained in Exhibit A, as herein above referred to.

(b) A person may petition City Council for inclusion on the contributing building survey after its adoption, upon the recommendation of the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission; and

(c) A building cannot be deleted from the survey, unless destroyed by fire, flood, or act of God, etc., or major accidental damage not the fault of the owner.

**Section 8. DEMOLITION REVIEW BOARD**

(a) There shall be and is hereby created a Demolition Review Board which shall consist of 5 members. The 5 members of the Board shall be appointed by the Mayor from nominations from the following organizations or their successors: the lower downtown property owners, nominated jointly by the Development Association of Lower Downtown and the Lower Downtown Property Owners Association and such other property owner group representing Lower Downtown, registered with the Planning Office and designated by the Landmark Preservation Commission; the lower downtown residents or business owners nominated jointly by the Downtown Residents' Organization and Downtown Denver Inc. and such other resident or business organization representing Lower Downtown, registered with the Planning Office and designated by the Landmark Preservation Commission and who must reside or own a business in Lower Downtown; the Denver Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; a developer, nominated by the district councilmember, with experience in the rehabilitation of commercial or residential projects similar in scale to the buildings in lower downtown; and one member to be appointed from the Landmark Preservation Commission. The appointments shall be made by the Mayor upon the recommendation of the Landmark Preservation Commission with consideration in maintaining a balance of interests and skills, and with consideration in maintaining of the individual qualifications of the candidates including their training, experience, knowledge or interest in architecture, urban design, real estate, financial analysis, rehabilitation/renovation, preservation or redevelopment;

(b) Each member of the Board (except the first members hereinafter specifically provided for) shall serve a term of 5 years and may be removed only for cause upon written charges. The first members of the Board shall be appointed for terms of one, two and three years, respectively, as designated by the Mayor in the order of appointment. As their terms respectively expire, the appointment shall be for a full term of five years. Vacancies shall be filled by the Mayor for the unexpired term of any member whose term becomes vacant; and

(c) A concurring vote of a majority of the Board shall be necessary to decide in favor of the applicant on any matter upon which the Board is required to pass.

---

(d) The Board shall by rules and regulation establish a designated pool of no less than 10 persons composed of those individuals nominated but not appointed in a given year. The applicant may select two advisors without voting powers.

**Section 9. EVALUATION OF ORDINANCE.** Amended 2/29/88

(a) **General.** To achieve a comprehensive revitalization program for the Lower Downtown Preservation District, it is contemplated that participation in this endeavor is not only the responsibility of the property owners but must include the support and involvement of the Denver City Government, other governmental entities, historic preservationists, and the community as a whole.

(b) **Evaluation.** Every two years for six years from the effective date of this ordinance, City Council shall hold a public hearing to evaluate the effectiveness of this ordinance. As part of that evaluation, Council shall consider the question of whether to retain or repeal the Demolition Review provisions of the ordinance. In conducting the public hearing, Council must consider the following:

- (1) testimony from the Demolition Review Board, including a written report of the Board's activities;
- (2) testimony from the Denver Planning Board and appropriate city officials on how the City is meeting its responsibilities as to:
  - a. compliance with the Downtown Area Plan as it relates to the Lower Downtown District, including pedestrian environment, quality housing and retail,
  - b. availability of leveraged financing from governmental and other sources, including revolving loan funds, and
  - c. provision of sufficient capitol improvements for streetscaping and lighting to create the needed environment for development goals;
- (3) testimony as to how the community as a whole has economically supported the Lower Downtown District.

PASSED by the Council March 7,1988  
Stephanie Foote -President

APPROVED: Federico Peña -Mayor  
March 9, 1988

ATTEST: Felicia Muftic -Clerk and Recorder, Ex-Officio Clerk of the City and County of Denver

PUBLISHED In the Daily Journal  
February 5, 1988 and March 21,1988

PREPARED BY: City Attorney's Office and Denver Planning

REVIEWED BY: Patricia Wells, City Attorney January 28, 1988

---

---

D E D I C A T I O N

---

---

To  
*the vision, investment and sacrifice  
of those generations that came before,  
and  
the responsibilities that will be the heritage  
of those who come after.*



---

---

C R E D I T S

---

---

***Wellington E. Webb***

MAYOR

---

**LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Jean Catherwood      Barbara J. Norgren  
Kathleen Hoeft      Stanley Pouw  
Marjorie Hornbein      Roz Schneider  
James C. Morgan      Ruth Falkenberg  
Thomas J. Noel

---

**LOWER DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

John Anderson      Charles Callaway  
Jerry Glick      Bar Chadwick  
James C. Morgan      Planning & Community Development Office  
Joanne Salzman

---

**PREPARED BY:**

Sara Jane MacLennan      Mark Leese  
Design Ventures, Inc.      Department of Public Works  
Gregg Brown      Mark Hess Graphic Artist  
DHM, Inc.      Planning & Community Development Office