

# CHAPTER 16

## THE BURCKHAULTER CHARACTER AREA



The Burckhaulter Character Area is essentially confined to the top and sides of a prominent hill behind the Commercial District. Early development here took advantage of the southern exposure and access to downtown. Today the Burckhaulter Character Area contains only the western portion of what historically was identified as the Burckhaulter Neighborhood. (The eastern portion is now vacant land and is excluded from the Character Area boundary.)

### **Historic Significance**

This neighborhood dates from (1863-1890) and originally contained many of the community's oldest residential buildings. Historically, this area had several large and "high-style" buildings, including the Burckhaulter Mansion itself, which was destroyed by fire in 1976.

Truckee's mortuary was also located in the Burckhaulter Character Area. The mortuary business was later relocated to the Church Street/Trout Creek Character Area, across from the community center.



*Historically, this area had several large and "high-style" buildings.*

### **Historic Character Description**

Due to the steep topography found in the Burckhaulter neighborhood, the area was not as densely developed as residential streets below it. Much larger houses, located on larger lots, were also the norm here. Many of these were built toward the rear of their lots, at the top of the steep slopes, and facing downhill. Because of this, a long series of straight stairs were very common. There also seemed to be private access to carriage houses and barns at the top of these parcels, opposite the public access from the stairs.

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☞ Please see page 97 (Chapter 13: General Guidelines for New Buildings) for a map that shows this Character Area in its Truckee context.

## Current Character

The Burckhaulters Character Area contains a collection of Victorian era residences that date from 1890 to 1910. They represent a distinctive part of town and contribute greatly to the downtown's historic significance. Alterations have slightly diminished the collection of Victorian, Queen Anne and Italianate style properties. Additionally, several modern residential properties—both single-family and multifamily—have been constructed in this area.

With respect to scale, buildings range from small cottages to larger, single-family homes. Maintenance facilities for CalTrans also are located in the neighborhood. Most buildings are simple in design, although some ornamentation was used historically. The smaller houses tend to exhibit very few details, reserving most ornamentation for porches. Larger houses show more ornamental detail. However, even these are modest overall. This limited range of application is an important characteristic of the area.

Exterior wall materials traditionally were horizontal wood siding. Stone was used generally for foundations.

The limited combination of roof forms found on many buildings creates another striking feature. Most are simple gabled or hip roofs. Steep pitches are common. Wood shingles and standing seam metal were used on many early buildings, while today composition shingles are frequently used.



*Porches are distinctive features in the Burckhaulters Area.*

Some key design characteristics of this Character Area include:

- Single family residences are the dominant type of structure
- Several larger houses were here historically, mixed in with smaller ones
- Front yards are defined by a fence
- Wood lap siding is the dominant building material
- Variety of architectural styles exists
- Gabled or hipped roofs dominate
- Simple detailing
- Hillside backdrop
- Rear portions of lot adjacent to Keiser while building fronts face downhill
- Buildings range from one-and-one half to two-and-one half stories
- Raised porches overlooking Jibboom Street
- Buildings are located to the rear of the lot
- Majority of yard is on the downhill slope
- Auto access from Keiser
- Retaining wall



*A long set of stairs was commonly used for public access from the street below the house.*

## Design Goals & Policies

The Burckhauler Character Area should continue to develop with buildings that relate in form, mass and scale to residential structures seen historically.

The design goals for the Burckhauler Character Area are:

- To emphasize the preservation and restoration of historic structures, when feasible
- To continue the use of traditional building materials
- To maintain traditional building mass, scale and forms
- To minimize visual impacts of hill cuts, using stepped retaining walls and landscaping
- To encourage the use of front porches that face the street
- To encourage detached garages and other secondary structures that are subordinate in character and scale to the primary structure



*Retaining walls and fences were popular to define property lines. In addition note that secondary structures were subordinate in character and scale to the primary structure.*

# Design Guidelines for New Buildings

## 1. Mass and Scale

Historically there were both smaller and larger residences mixed together in the Burckhault Character Area. These residences shared similar detailing and were generally one and one-half to two and one-half stories. The mass and size of buildings in Truckee are among the elements that have greatest influence on compatible construction in the community. The height, width and depth of a new building should be compatible with historic buildings within the Burckhault Character Area and especially with those structures that are immediately adjacent to the new building. The size of a building also should relate to its lot size and placement on the lot.

**A. New construction should appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found in the Burckhault Character Area.**

**B. A larger building should be divided into “modules” that reflect the traditional scale of construction.**

- 1) If a larger building is divided into “modules,” these should be expressed three-dimensionally, by having significant architectural changes throughout the entire building.
- 2) Consider stepping down the mass of larger buildings to minimize the perceived scale at the street.

**C. A facade should appear similar in dimension to those seen historically in the town.**

- 1) Building elements should be in scale with the overall mass of the building.

**D. Use building masses that reinforce the perception of the natural topography.**

- 1) Buildings that cut into slopes are encouraged where they can help minimize the perceived mass and size.
- 2) Step a building down to minimize visual impacts and reduce the apparent height.

## 2. Building Orientation

The Burckhault Character Area varies in grade and has a number of lots which can be accessed from either the uphill street edge or the downhill street edge. Many of the larger structures were oriented to face the downhill street front.

**A. Orient facades to the street.**

- 1) On streets with a significant grade change building facades should orient to face the downhill street front.

## 3. Views

Traditionally in the Burckhault Character Area the hillside served as the backdrop to structures. Views to the hillside should be preserved.

**A. Screen views from the public way to any service or parking areas.**

- 1) Landscaping is encouraged, and may be required in order to mitigate visual impacts of service areas.
- 2) Any landscaping, when mature, should maintain existing views to the hillside.

**B. Preserve views to scenic features and the hillside.**

- 1) Consider positioning buildings on the site to maintain significant view corridors.

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### References:

☞ See also Chapter 10: Design Guidelines for Site Features and Chapter 13: General Guidelines for New Buildings.