Spires, turrets, fast-food, a Renaissance library, and a glassy courthouse make the North a rich mosaic of 20th century styles.
The North spreads west to Highway 55 below the beige of the Boise foothills. Pictured: Halloween at the Harry C. Wyman House on Harrison Boulevard. Previous: St. John’s Cathedral.
North Boise spreads like a V from the Fort Street cottonwood cabin where John and Mary O'Farrell built the city's first permanent home. Bounded by State Street and the Boise foothills, the triangle opens toward Eagle. Its ten neighborhoods subdivide into 546 subdivisions with 14 public schools, 9 city parks and 5 city fire stations. Twenty-two blocks along Franklin and Hays form a Near North historic district. Nearby is historic Hyde Park where gentrification has created a tourist district. Harrison Boulevard, a third historic district, funnels skiers to Bogus Basin. Known for arcing trees and zealous trick-or-treaters, the boulevard is an elegant mix of eclectic housing styles.

The North's first subdivisions bordered the cavalry fort. In 1891, when President Benjamin Harrison visited to celebrate Idaho's statehood, Boiseans landscaped 18th Street, creating Harrison Boulevard. Electric streetcars reached Hyde Park in 1892. West State Street became a Boise-to-Caldwell railroad. Boardwalks and service alleys paralleled streetcar lines.
Gridded but uneven, the North End emerged as a mix of gingerbread Victorians and kit-made catalog homes. In 1905, on Harrison at Eastman, Tourtellotte designed his firm's last corner turret. The California Mission Revival reached Boise in the red-roofed George Washington Bond House, completed in 1911. English cottages and the Tudor Revival gained popularity in the 1920s and 1930s. Homebuyers with modest resources came to prefer a space-efficient, functional, low-roofed style of working-class housing called the California Craftsman Bungalow.

Today, the North sprawls to the west through postwar subdivisions. Pressured by traffic and relentless demand for evermore surface parking, North Boise remains, nevertheless, a treasure of iconic streetscapes. Our sampling features fast food, churches, a courthouse, a park, a historic shopping district and streets with service alleys built along trolley lines.

**Military Reserve on Fort Street**

*Fort Street from Reserve to Sixth*

*Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact*

On November 18, 1867, four years after the United States Army founded a cavalry fort on the road to Idaho City, Mayor Henry E. Prickett filed the official plat that incorporated Boise City. The cavalry parade grounds in the military reserve on Fort Street became the township's northern edge. Locally known as Camp Boise or The Boise Barracks, the fort specialized in the training of horses for cavalry troops. In 1919 the U.S. Public Health Service took over the site for a tuberculosis hospital. A Veterans Administration hospital opened in 1938. Portions of the reserve passed to the Boise City Parks in 1950 and the

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*Fort Boise officer's sword, about 1863. Opposite: Hollywood Market on Eighth Street is locally known for cigarettes, candy, a meat counter and "the coldest beer in town."*
Idaho Elks Rehabilitation Hospital in 1957. Clint Eastwood rented the grounds for the filming of *Bronco Billy* in 1979.

Tennis, softball, a skateboard park and a community theater have altered historic Fort Street, but frontier buildings remain. The fort's Officers Row preserves an 1860s sandstone warehouse. The steeple-notched John and Mary O'Farrell Cabin also dates from the era of Lincoln. At 550 W. Fort is the street's tallest structure. Designed by the Hummel architectural firm and completed in 1968, the James A. McClure Federal Building and United States Courthouse stands like a block on a pedestal, with five massive stories on a two-story vertical lift. An apron of manicured grass sets the building back from Fort Street. Its west side is buffered by a small city park. Architecturally, the style has been called structural expressionism. The huge mass of the structure has impact but does not overwhelm.

The courthouse and Fort Street rate high for scale, utility, consistency and impact. They fail the identity rating, however, because the newer buildings have lost the aesthetic connections to Boise's historic North End. Open land in the military reserve has lured an architectural mismatch. Likewise it was the lure of federal land that drew the courthouse away from the city's professional center. Today the building's Fort Street location is generally regarded as a mistake.
Hyde Park
North 13th Street, bounded by Alturas and Ridenbaugh

★ Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact

Hyde Park was perhaps Boise’s first streetcar shopping district. In 1892, at 1401 N. 13th St., electric trolley service connected downtown to Speiler’s dry goods and grocery store. A barber shop and butcher shop followed; also a shoe shop, bike shop, post office, hotel, dyer, dairy and cement brick factory. In 1903, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows built a red brick meeting hall with a movable dance floor. A brick circle in the intersection marks the roundabout turnout where Boiseans stepped off the streetcar so conductors could swivel the cars.

A diversified mix of commercial and residential is a goal of smart-growth planning and a challenge for historic Hyde Park. Historic houses are gingerbread trimmed with Victorian brackets and corbels. Commercial landmarks include the concrete-block two-story Waymire Building, completed in 1902. Shops use canvas awnings to shelter pedestrian traffic. Replica aluminum faux cast-iron lamps recall the era of streetcars. Sidewalks are elbowed into the intersections to narrow the river of cars.

Restoration and gentrification have remade tiny Hyde Park. A hub for mountain bikers, the district jumps with stops for sushi and gourmet burritos, shopping boutiques and a small hotel. Gone are
Canopied shops and walkable streets make the Hyde Park Historic District a model of mixed-use New Urbanism. In 1980, Boise City Council stepped in to protect the district with Idaho's first commercial-residential historic preservation law. Pictured: Repairing bikes in the 1902 Clarence H. Waymire Building.
the coin laundries and daycares. Tourists stroll for antiques where the neighbors no longer frequent the mom-and-pop grocery stores.

**Collister Neighborhood**

West State Street to Hill and Cartwright Roads, from 36th to Pierce Park Lane

**Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact**

In 1907, about three miles west of the Statehouse, George Collister and Walter E. Pierce established a depot for the Boise & Interurban Lines. Collister, a physician, had planted 240 acres with 12,000 peach trees. Pierce, a land developer, saw profit in a light-weight electric railroad. Completed in 1912, it linked Boise to Caldwell and back through Nampa and Meridian, a valley-wide loop of 68 miles. Collister depot became a shipping point for peaches and plums. In 1914, four-room Collister School had 80 students. Nearby at Pierce Park, the railroad connected Boise to a genteel boating park.

After 1927, when buses overtook streetcars, the orchards subdivided. Covenants of the 1940s allowed for one-acre farmsteads with a horse and a cow and fifty chickens per farm. Suburbanization followed. Taft Elementary relieved overcrowding at Collister School in 1960. The M&W Market anchored the Collister shopping center in 1962. Today on Collister Drive, the Collister depot houses Terry’s State Street Saloon.

Collister neighborhood ranks high for quintessential streetscapes. Its character remains “semi-rural” according to Boise City’s comprehensive plan. The neighborhood is vibrant and family-friendly. Distinctly Boise, well proportioned, easy-to-access and consistent with the bucolic feel of postwar subdivisions, the four-star district falls short on architectural impact.
Gone is Collister's 20 room mansion and the gazebos at Pierce Park. Today, Collister's features are no longer visually memorable; they carry no emotional weight. And yet, the neighborhood works hard at revitalization. At Hill Road and 36th Street, the city backs a plan for a traffic-calming roundabout intersection. Nearby, the 36th Street Garden Center has become a mixed-use commercial node with a coffee house and condos. And, a storefront branch library breathes new life into the Collister Shopping Center.

**Harrison Boulevard**
Hays at Reseguie to Hill and Bogus Basin Roads

★ Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact

Harrison Boulevard is the North’s architectural showplace. Charming and functional, with wide sidewalks and service alleys that hide the garages behind the houses, the boulevard is Idaho’s first municipal residential historic

Car 99 on the Boise-to-Caldwell interurban line.
Opposite: Terry’s on Collister at State Street, formerly a streetcar depot.
preservation district. Volunteers on a city commission review plans for renovation and new construction. There are no chain-link fences or vinyl or plastic siding or streetside asphalt driveways. There are no restrictions on the color of paint, but the commission works to preserve appropriate architecture and landscaping. Setback regulations ensure that large houses do not overwhelm.

Platted in 1891 and improved with median landscaping in 1916, the boulevard began as a streetcar suburb bisected by trolley lines. Its original promoter was Walter E. Pierce of Kansas City, Missouri. A railroad promoter and future mayor of Boise, Pierce landscaped the emerging North End with thousands of transplanted elm trees. His real estate promotions sold Boise as "a city of trees." Pierce and his partners, together with landowners John and Catherine Lemp, donated North End parcels for Washington and Longfellow schools. Homeowners lobbied for street sprinklers and parks through a boulevard neighborhood association. By 1917, with sidewalks, storm gutters and electric lights along its shaded parkway, the street had become a prideful model for Boise's genteel "city beautiful" movement. The Statesman called Harrison "an elite thoroughfare" and "one of the finest in the West."

Today, the historic grid keeps traffic moving efficiently without clogging any one intersection. Magnificent trees still shade immaculate sidewalks. Parents bring thousands of ghosts and goblins to kick through the leaves on Halloween night.

Architecturally, the boulevard is five-star quintessential for its mix of traditional styles. The two oldest houses are the Queen Anne villas designed by Tourtellotte and Hummel in 1901 and 1905. Colonials, Georgians, Bungalows and Mission Revivals followed the Queen Anne Era. Storybook Hansel-and-Gretel homes mixed Tudor and Picturesque styles. The boulevard also includes a log
cabin, a French chateau, a Greek Revival, a glass-bricked Art Modern, a Cold War bomb shelter, two former governor’s mansions and a seismically sound Hispanic fortress guarded by concrete lions.

Westside Drive-In
1929 W. State St.

★ Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact

Drive-in service transformed the American diner as Boise grew north and west after WWII. Built in 1957, the West Side is nifty-Fifties automotive deco: all neon and guilty pleasure, flamingo pink and white with angular carports. Double-sided windows still serve butterscotch shakes with sprinkles. Four dollars buys Chef Lou’s World Famous Idaho Potato Ice Cream. Identifiable, memorable, well-proportioned, easy-to-use and consistent with four lanes of traffic on State Street, the Westside Drive-In evokes nostalgia. It takes us back to an era when car hops roller skated and families learned to eat in their cars.

Near North Churches
State to Fort, from 8th to 13th Streets

Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact

Within six blocks of the Idaho Statehouse, between 8th and 13th in the northern-most tier of Boise's original town site, there are eight stellar churches: St. Michael's, Immanuel Lutheran, St. John's, Capitol City Christian, First Presbyterian, Cathedral of the Rockies, First Baptist and Christian Science. Most are the second or third church buildings for congregations that moved north to escape the downtown boom during the decade of statehood. Divided by theology, the churches join forces with social service for the homeless and poor. Some congregations struggle to maintain historic architecture. Boiseans raise money and public awareness through candlelight walking tours.

Church construction north of State Street predated the Idaho Statehouse. In 1902, at 518 N. 8th St.,

Boise Episcopalians dedicated the English Gothic St. Michael's Cathedral. Two years later, at 775 N. 8th St., Catholics commissioned Tourtellotte and Hummel for St. John the Evangelist, a grand Romanesque. Architect Hummel, a native of Germany, patterned the Boise cathedral after a German cathedral at Mainz.

The 1904 plan for St. John's Cathedral showed spires that were never completed. Opposite: Swedish Lutherans commissioned the Gothic Revival Augustana Chapel, opened in 1915.
The 1904 plan shows stone spires that were never constructed. Opened in 1920 and renovated in the 1960s, St. John’s remains Idaho’s largest cathedral. Its barrel-vaulted interior features marble, stained glass, painted acoustical canvas and cast-plaster ornamentation.

St. John’s rose in an active decade of Near North church construction. The Capitol City Christian Church, completed in 1910, was a heavy-arched Romanesque Revival with sliding doors and an unusual circular floor plan. Nearby at 7th and Fort the architects used shingles and sandstone for the Gothic Revival Swedish Lutheran Church. Boise Methodists later adapted the Gothic Revival to the flagstone Cathedral of the Rockies at 11th and Franklin. Willet Studios of Philadelphia designed the cathedral’s remarkable glass.

Carnegie Library
815 W. Washington St.

★ Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact

Boise’s library began with a promise from steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie. The Carnegie Foundation would pay for construction if the city would purchase the lot, form a library board and maintain the institution. With $20,000 from Carnegie, Boiseans broke ground in 1904. The library would become a “beautiful home of science and refinement,” boasted the Statesman in 1905.

Designed by Tourtellotte and Hummel, the building was bold for its time. Architects call the style Renaissance Revival. Small Tuscan columns flank the Palladian window arch. Vertically, the exterior walls resemble a three-tiered classical column with a capital, shaft and base.
 Camel’s Back Park
 Above Heron and 13th in Boise’s North End

★ Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact

The park gets its name from the dramatically hilled landscape that looks like a camel’s hump. A strenuous 1000-foot climb brings hikers to breathtaking views. Below to the north is the city’s thoroughly green Foothills Learning Center. On snow days the north face becomes a Mecca for gleeful tubers. In the third week of September, the park draws thousands of tourists for the North End’s neighborhood fair.

The gulches below the hump once housed livestock slaughterhouses. In 1881, on the backside above Eighth Street, two brothers from Silver City struck artesian water. Through a brick reservoir and wooden pipes, the wells fed hotels and hydrants on Main Street. Floods flashed through the gullies where children chased frogs, dug in the sand pits and splashed in the overflow ponds. In 1932, Boise City purchased 63 acres for a manicured park and nature preserve. Fires and mountain biking have since eroded the fragile hillside. In the 1990s the threat of hilltop housing projects seeded a conservation campaign. Conservationists prevailed in 2001 when Boise voters pledged $10 million to protect open space in the foothills. Tax dollars and private donations have helped the city acquire more than 8,000 hillside acres for habitat and hiking trails.

Open space in the Boise foothills provides hiking, biking and buffer to the North End’s housing sprawl. Pictured: Picnicking at Camel’s Back, about 1910.
Downtown Family YMCA
1050 W. State St.

★ Identity ★ Scale ★ Utility ★ Consistency ★ Impact

The YMCA is quintessential because the building reflects its neighborhood’s sense of itself as caring, egalitarian, hard-working and healthy. Founded in 1901, the downtown YMCA now sits on its third location. Soaring membership kept pace with the fitness craze of the 1990s and the North End’s housing boom. Beautifully remodeled in 2000, the Y complex is a puzzle efficiently packed with pools, exercise rooms, racquetball and basketball courts, waterslides, a climbing wall, a drop-in daycare, a teen activity center and a roof-top playground. Banners and steamy windows promote clean uplifting fun. Glassy and light, with floor-to-ceiling windows that warm the aquatic center, the Y actively hums with neighborly interaction. Its parts work independently, yet they complement the whole.

Growth of the downtown Y has remade its historic streetscape. In 2000, as membership surged in the wake of a $8.6 million renovation, the Y added 22 spaces of parking and a peak-hour parking attendant. Preservationists responded by proposing a 22-block Near North Conservation District. Of the district’s 443 city lots, 61 were already devoted to surface parking. Only 64 of the lots still had single-family homes.

The brightly renovated YMCA in its third downtown location fronts newly restored Boise High School. Opposite: A turn-of-the century cottage on 13th Street in the Hyde Park Historic District.