Boz Theater. For decades the Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1910, with its chandeliered domed ceiling and rooftop garden was billed as the most "modern and complete" hotel between Chicago and San Francisco. It fronted the Larsen Building, 1904, which housed the prom-date banquet room of the Royal Restaurant, 1947.

A pot-bellied stove still heats Hannifin’s, where prominent men talked politics and bought their cigars. The Blues Bouquet preserves its elegant turn-of-the-century brass and mahogany bar. Architectural gems nearby include the Chicago-Style Empire Building, 1910, and the sandstone Hack and Transfer Building, 1908, now El Korah Temple of the Shriners fraternal club.

The Boise State University College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs proudly supports the preservation and urban renewal of downtown with classes and events at 1020 W. Main in the university’s Center on Main.

Boise’s Mercantile Block recalls the era of hotels, theaters, and merchant houses that made Boise a retail hub. Developed in the turn-of-the-century era of trolleys, when electricity and a downtown depot transformed the streets and their architecture, the block extends from the Idaho to the Owyhee Hotel along the 1000 block of West Main. The area largely survived the devastation of 1970s urban renewal when more than 80 historic buildings were razed from the core of downtown. Today the 1000 block is the last section of Main’s trolley streetscape without big-box garages or surface parking. Walking the storied streetscape helps guests revisit the architectural landmarks, historical events, and colorful personalities that make Boise like no other place.
1. Idanha Hotel, 1901. Guests of the historic Idanha Hotel included Presidents William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt, and Harry Orchard, who assassinated Idaho Governor Frank Steunenberg in 1905.

2. One Capital Center, 1975. Designed by John Graham and Co., who also designed Seattle’s Space Needle. The park next door served as the Idaho Shakespeare Festival’s original home.

3. Larson Building, 1910. Constructed to replace the Prout and Larson Grocery Store’s original structure, the second floor housed the Olympic Hotel and the ground floor welcomed visitors as the Boz Theater.

4. Smith Block, 1905. Built for Roscoe W. Smith, the block replaced one of Boise’s earliest buildings built by Dr. Ephraim Smith, the mayor of Boise in 1866.

5. Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1910. Designed by J.E. Tourtellotte and Chicago hotel expert R.T. Newberry, its Candlelite Room and club rooms housed meetings of Boise associations and important figures such as Senator William E. Borah.


7. El Korah Temple, 1908. Boise Hack and Transfer originally occupied this building, which was later remodeled by the El Korah Shriners.


11. Tiner Building, 1910. The Tiner originally housed the Manitou Hotel in its upper floors, and the grand New Boz Theater on the ground floor. The Blues Bouquet moved to this location in 1975.


14. U.S. Bank Building, 1937. This neo-classical style building served as an addition to the Empire Building.

15. Grove Street Illuminated & Boise Canal, 2003. Amy Westover built this public sculpture to commemorate the Grove Street Neighborhood and Boise Canal, which runs underneath the 1000 block of Main.