

First, check to see whether your house has already been documented. The State Historic Preservation Office has files on thousands of buildings throughout the state, including those listed in the State and National registers. We are in the process of scanning these files (estimated completion of all records are 2025) and to see if your building has a scanned file, go to this [link](#) (you can sort by County and City to narrow your search), or here for earlier National Register properties [here for earlier National Register properties](#). You can search our online map system for your house and neighborhood as well by visiting the [HUB](#).

If your house has not been documented previously, then you should check the following sources for information:

1. Title abstracts (County Recorder's Office)--Research all the transactions involving your property, noting the date, names of buyers and sellers, and the dollar amounts and types of transactions (warranty deed, quit claim deed, mortgage, etc.). Indications of a construction date are the first relatively large mortgage or the dramatic increase in the selling price of the property. Note: you will need the legal description of the property to do this research, not simply the address.
2. Sanborn Maps (Research Center of the Utah State Archives and Utah State History and the Marriott Library). Most Sanborn maps can be found online at the University of Utah [Marriott Library digital collections site](#). There are also [maps scanned by the Division of State History](#). These fire insurance maps were drawn for over 75 communities in the state, many as early as the 1880s up to 1969. The maps show each building on the principal blocks in the community and they are color coded to indicate the various construction materials. By comparing the maps from different years, you can determine approximate construction dates and changes to the building and property.
3. Tax file -- The file for a property usually provides an estimated date of construction (don't trust it completely). It may also contain an older photograph of your house and perhaps other structural information. Nearly all Utah Counties have an online mapping system that allows you to view parcels and current owners, but nearly all lack any historical information. To find these resources just search "County Assessor's Office" or if your property is in Salt Lake County, [use this link](#).
4. Building permit registers-- These provide the date the permit was issued, the address of the property, the estimated cost of construction, a brief description of the building, the name of the owner, and sometimes the names of the architect and builder. ( [Salt Lake City, 1889 1954, online](#) and Provo, 1922-25,1928 )
5. Newspapers (Research Center and university libraries)--Newspapers for many Utah communities are available online in the free [Utah Digital Newspapers archive](#), or for subscription at [Newspapers.com](#).
  - a. Small town newspapers--These are generally weekly newspapers. Information about the construction of major buildings in the community--schools, churches, public buildings, commercial buildings--usually appears on the front page. References to the construction of houses are often found in the "local" column.
  - b. Large city newspapers--Daily newspapers, such as the *Deseret News* and the *Salt Lake Tribune*, usually have a real estate section in which most of the important construction news appears. Information about the construction of individual houses is also given, though not on a consistent or complete basis. Advertisements in this section by builders and real estate firms are also useful sources of information, often highlighting recently completed buildings.
  - c. Annual "List of Buildings" for Salt Lake City--These appear in the January 1st issue of the *Salt Lake Tribune* from 1889 until 1899. The lists give the location, cost, brief description, and name of the owner of each building constructed during the previous year.
  - d. "List of Buildings" for Ogden--This list is the same as that described above for Salt Lake City. However, it appears only one time--*Salt Lake Tribune*, January 1, 1892, p. 39 (for buildings constructed in 1891).

6. Architects File —Over many years SHPO has collected Information about many of the architects and builders in Utah along with lists of some of the buildings they designed or constructed and are found at [this link](#).
7. Architectural drawings of historic buildings are extremely rare since most houses were not individually designed by formally schooled architects. Even the works of many of Utah's prominent architects are unavailable. The best collection of historic architectural drawings is at the [U of U Marriott Library Special Collections](#). These are organized under each architect's name, so you must determine who the architect of your house is before you begin searching for specific drawings. The Division of State History's Research Center also has a few [architectural drawings](#) (check with Research Center staff, as these are in the process of being scanned).
8. Biographical information on owners can be found in the following sources:
  - a. City directories (larger cities only)--These annual listings provide the names, addresses and occupations of everyone in the city. They are arranged in alphabetical order by name in the earlier years, but from 1924 on properties are listed by both occupant name and address. Directories are useful in verifying when a house was built and whether the owner lived in it himself or rented it out. Some have been scanned and can be found [here](#).
  - b. State gazetteers (some have been scanned, see link above) --These annual volumes include virtually every community in the state, but unlike city directories they usually list only those who are involved with business enterprises and they do not give addresses.
  - c. Biographical index--Arranged alphabetically by name, this card catalog gives specific references for names found in publications at the Research Center.
  - d. "Mormons and Their Neighbors"-- a two volume reference set that provides names and in what biographical/historical references information for them is found.
  - e. Biographical encyclopedias such as "Pioneers and Prominent Men," "Utah's Distinguished Personalities," etc. (Research Center and other libraries).
  - f. Genealogical records (LDS Church Family History Library), also available online at websites such as [FamilySearch](#), or [Ancestry.com](#).
  - g. Census schedules (available on microfilm at the Research Center, university and genealogical libraries, and online at various websites)--These list the members of each household, their ages, occupations, places of birth etc. In some later census schedules the address of each household may also be given. Census schedules are arranged by county and city and are available for each decade from 1850 to 1940 (1890 excluded). These are also available online through various genealogy subscription accounts.
  - h. Family histories--Written histories, journals, letters, photographs, etc. are sometimes available from family members. Verbal accounts from the family and others associated with the property are also often useful.
  - i. Obituaries. The Obituary Index is available on microfilm at Research Center, and also university and genealogical libraries—Indexes obituaries in the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret News* from 1850 to 1970. The *Salt Lake Tribune* is also indexed separately from 1941 to 1991. There are several online resources for searching more recent obituaries, including [FamilySearch.com](#) and [Legacy.com](#), among others. There is also
  - j. Local histories—community and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' ward histories may contain information about early settlers or prominent community members.
9. Further Research—If you are struggling to find more information you can always reach out to the Utah SHPO staff for more information and additional leads on your particular property by contacting Cory Jensen ([coryjensen@utah.gov](mailto:coryjensen@utah.gov)).