



Old North End Neighborhood Historic Ironwork Tour continued

Colorado Springs, home of the Hassell Iron Works, has an especially handsome collection of decorative iron fences dating from the late 1800s. The fences represent a happy union of taste and technology, combining intricate design with durable materials at a price which made them attractive alternatives to wood, wire and hedging. Ornamental iron fences required a high initial investment, but since they were almost maintenance-free (and usually outlasted their owners), they offered a long-term economy. Foundry-cast ornamental ironwork cashed in on the prestige and status traditionally accorded hand-crafted wrought iron, but at a fraction of the cost.

The designs were irresistible: Roman arches over fluted spearheads, surrounded by Gothic tracery and Classic scrolls, all fitted together in a graceful and repetitious expanse. Foundries standardized sizes to cut production costs; typical iron pickets and line posts stood about three feet high, gate posts a bit higher. Occasional shortened versions were set into sandstone pedestals.

Not all patterns were elaborate. We fault the Victorians for their fussy tastes, but they had a more discerning eye than we give them credit for. One of Hassell's most popular iron fences repeated a simple pattern of overlapping arches with no embellishments whatever. He achieved a similar effect of spare elegance from stylized floral castings set atop plain iron pickets. Hassell used traditional forms as well, and offered his clients a seemingly infinite variety of designs.

To access a .pdf file with a complete walking tour of the Old North End Neighborhood's historic ironwork click the links below.

[Old North End Neighborhood Historic Ironwork Tour Page 1](#)

[Old North End Neighborhood Historic Ironwork Tour Page 2](#)