



City of Santa Barbara
Planning Division

Memorandum

MEETING DATE: September 1, 2021

TO: Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC)

FROM: Nicole Hernandez, City Urban Historian

SUBJECT: Staff Evaluation of fence

ADDRESS: 401 East Sola Street

PROJECT: Designated Historic Structure of Merit, constructed in 1915 in the Craftsman style. Proposal to permit an as-built wood fence frame with proposed Craftsman style wood pickets with brick pillars at the corners and a 42" hedge behind the fence. Also proposed is a new wood entry arbor with 6' wood panel gates with lattice in the top portion flanked by 6'2" hedge on the front elevation, and a new brick entry arbor with 6' wood panel gates on the side elevation. Project will abate ENF2021-00320.



This memo prepared by the Architectural Historian evaluates the proposed project on the historic resource by determining if the project follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The purpose of this staff evaluation is to assist the Historic Landmarks Commission, in the review of a project when no Historic Structures/Sites Report (HSSR) has been prepared and in order to guide applicants and Commissioners appropriately towards avoiding or lessening project impacts.

Relevant Historic Resource Design Guidelines Adopted in 2021 for Fences Walls and Hedges (attached)

Historically, stone walls, hedges, wood picket, and wrought iron fences that were low in height were used at the front of a property. They were relatively transparent in nature, allowing views into front yards.

4.2.49 Match new fences and walls in material, height, and design with those that appear historically in the neighborhood and the architecture of the house.

4.2.50 Select new front yard fencing that is simple and made of see-through wood picket fencing or wrought iron so that the building is the focal point, not the fence.

4.2.51 Paint wrought iron fencing dark green-black or red-black.

4.2.52 Maintain fences or shrubbery fronting a house at a height and transparency below 3’-6” in order to preserve views to and from the street appropriate to the preservation of a “street-friendly” relationship.

4.2.53 Stain or paint wood fences.

4.2.54 Avoid the use of hollow tubular steel in fences, which has a much shorter life span than solid steel stock.

4.2.55 Avoid installing metal, chain link, or plastic fences or walls of non-traditional material, such as concrete block, railroad ties, or faux materials.

4.2.56 Avoid installing tall, solid wood fencing in front of your property.

4.2.57 Avoid installing a fence style that does not match your building.

Compliance With the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

The property will still be used as a residence, the proposed craftsman style picket fence and 42” hedge will maintain the view of the house on the streetscape so that it will relate to the traditional streetscape. Arbors were traditionally used to enhance an entrance to a yard, however the proposed 6’ gate at the front elevation is not a traditional streetscape feature as it reads more as a door than a low gate the same height as the front fence as would be more traditional. The tall gates on the side elevation do not block or change and distinctive features, spaces or spatial relationships of the front elevation to the street. The proposed fence, low hedge, arbor and side gate and arbor meet Standard 1. The front 6’ gate with 6’2” hedges flanking the arbor do change the spatial relationship of the house on the streetscape and do not meet Standard 1.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

The project does not meet Standard 2. The proposed fence, low hedge, arbor and side gate and arbor meet Standard 2. The front 6’ gate with 6’2” hedges flanking the arbor do change the spatial relationship of the house on the streetscape and do not meet Standard 2.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

No conjectural features are proposed for the building. The project meets standard 3.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

No changes have acquired historic significance in their own right.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

The project is not proposing any changes to the actual house, so the distinctive materials. Features and finishes of the Craftsman house will be preserved so the project meets Standard 5

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

No deteriorated features will be replaced in this project so the project meets Standard 6.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

No work on the historic material of the house is proposed so the project meets Standard 7.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

This Standard is not applicable.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

The proposed fence, low hedge, arbor and side gate and arbor meet Standard 9 as they maintain the spatial relationship of the house with the streetscape. The Craftsman style wood pickets of the fence, the wood arbors and 42" hedge are compatible in materials, features, size, scale and proportion and massing to the house and the Streetscape. The front 6' gate with 6'2" hedges flanking the arbor are not compatible in size, scale and proportion, and massing and break up the streetscape and do change the spatial relationship of the house on the streetscape that characterizes the property and do not meet Standard 9.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

If the fence, arbors, gates and hedge were removed, the essential form and integrity of the building and the environment would be unimpaired and the project would meet Standard 10.

ARCHITCTURAL HISTORIAN CONCLUSION. The proposed Craftsman style wood pickets of the fence, the wood arbors and 42" hedge meets the Historic Landmarks Commission's Historic Resource Design Guidelines for Fences Walls and Hedges and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. However, the front 6' gate with 6'2" hedges flanking the arbor does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards would cause a negative impact to the historic resource, as it alters the houses spatial relationship with the streetscape. The project, therefore does not qualify for a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) categorical exemption as per section 15064.7 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Attachments: Relevant Historic Resource Design Guidelines

FENCES, WALLS, AND HEDGES

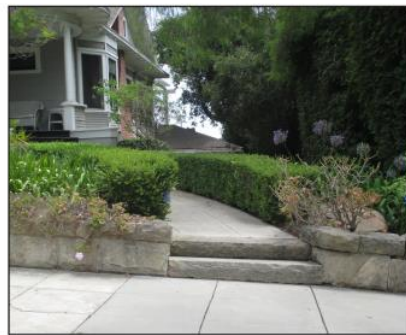


Transparent low fencing is typical for historic streetscapes like the low wrought iron fence topping a low sandstone wall.



In a typical historic manner, this sidewalk is lined with a low sandstone wall topped by a low hedge, allowing a view to the yard and house.

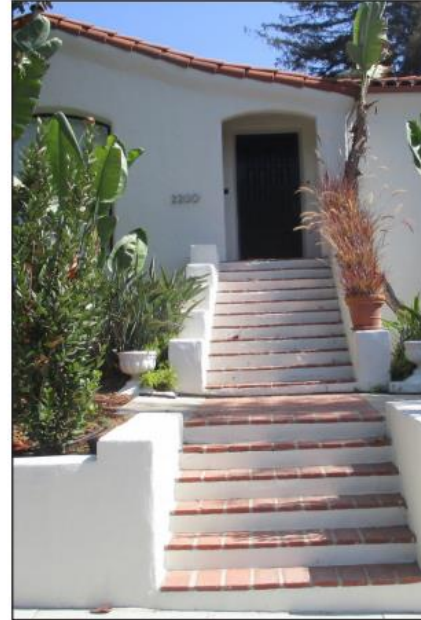
Historically, stone walls, hedges, wood picket, and wrought iron fences that were low in height were used at the front of a property. They were relatively transparent in nature, allowing views into front yards. Santa Barbara is known for its beautiful shades of sandstone that were used in walls throughout the City. The stones were locally quarried and the walls built by talented Italian stonemasons. These walls are important assets to the City and should be preserved, retained, and restored. If an original stone retaining wall is collapsing and needs to be reconstructed in concrete, use the original stone as a veneer. Reduce water pressure on a retaining wall by improving drainage behind it or by providing drains in the wall to allow moisture to pass through it. Although sandstone retaining walls are encouraged for the streetscape, concrete retaining walls are appropriate for portions of the property not visible from the public-right-of-way.



Sandstone curb on the street edge, a low sandstone wall, and sandstone steps lead up to the walkway lined by low hedging at this historic home.

GUIDELINES

- 4.2.42 Preserve and repair original fences and masonry walls to original condition.
- 4.2.43 Maintain existing retaining walls.
- 4.2.44 Replace only the portions of stone walls that are deteriorated to match the original in color, texture, size, and finish.
- 4.2.45 Re-point stone walls using a mortar mix that matches the original mortar, and match the original joint design.
- 4.2.46 Rebuild stone walls where collapsed with the salvaged original materials.
- 4.2.47 Keep the front yard open where no fence currently or historically existed.
- 4.2.48 Install new retaining walls with materials to match existing historic retaining walls in the area.
- 4.2.49 Match new fences and walls in material, height, and design with those that appear historically in the neighborhood and the architecture of the house.
- 4.2.50 Select new front yard fencing that is simple and made of see-through wood picket fencing or wrought iron so that the building is the focal point, not the fence.
- 4.2.51 Paint wrought iron fencing dark green-black or red-black.
- 4.2.52 Maintain fences or shrubbery fronting a house at a height and transparency below 3'-6" in order to preserve views to and from the street appropriate to the preservation of a "street-friendly" relationship.
- 4.2.53 Stain or paint wood fences.
- 4.2.54 Avoid the use of hollow tubular steel in fences, which has a much shorter life span than solid steel stock.
- 4.2.55 Avoid installing metal, chain link, or plastic fences or walls of non-traditional material, such as concrete block, railroad ties, or faux materials.
- 4.2.56 Avoid installing tall, solid wood fencing in front of your property.
- 4.2.57 Avoid installing a fence style that does not match your building.
- 4.2.58 Avoid painting historic sandstone retaining walls.
- 4.2.59 Avoid using faux sandstone to replace original sandstone.
- 4.2.60 Avoid using retaining walls over 4' tall on a hillside. Instead use two or more retaining walls stepped up the hillside.



A low stucco wall is typical for a Spanish Colonial Revival style landscape.

