

COMPLIANCE AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD

March 21, 2025

HDRC CASE NO: 2025-046
ADDRESS: 926 LAMAR ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 1655 BLK C LOT 21 495-123753-203
ZONING: R-5, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 2
DISTRICT: Dignowity Hill Historic District
APPLICANT: Bryan Sory
OWNER: Bryan Sory/SORY BRYAN D
TYPE OF WORK: Landscape modifications
APPLICATION RECEIVED: February 10, 2025
60-DAY REVIEW: April 11, 2025
CASE MANAGER: Bryan Morales

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to modify the existing landscape to include wholesale removal of grass and the installation of landscaping rock.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

3. Landscape Design

A. PLANTINGS

- i. *Historic Gardens*—Maintain front yard gardens when appropriate within a specific historic district.
- ii. *Historic Lawns*—Do not fully remove and replace traditional lawn areas with impervious hardscape. Limit the removal of lawn areas to mulched planting beds or pervious hardscapes in locations where they would historically be found, such as along fences, walkways, or drives. Low-growing plantings should be used in historic lawn areas; invasive or large-scale species should be avoided. Historic lawn areas should never be reduced by more than 50%.
- iii. *Native xeric plant materials*—Select native and/or xeric plants that thrive in local conditions and reduce watering usage. See UDC Appendix E: San Antonio Recommended Plant List—All Suited to Xeriscape Planting Methods, for a list of appropriate materials and planting methods. Select plant materials with a similar character, growth habit, and light requirements as those being replaced.
- iv. *Plant palettes*—If a varied plant palette is used, incorporate species of taller heights, such informal elements should be restrained to small areas of the front yard or to the rear or side yard so as not to obstruct views of or otherwise distract from the historic structure.
- v. *Maintenance*—Maintain existing landscape features. Do not introduce landscape elements that will obscure the historic structure or are located as to retain moisture on walls or foundations (e.g., dense foundation plantings or vines) or as to cause damage.

B. ROCKS OR HARDSCAPE

- i. *Impervious surfaces* —Do not introduce large pavers, asphalt, or other impervious surfaces where they were not historically located.
- ii. *Pervious and semi-pervious surfaces*—New pervious hardscapes should be limited to areas that are not highly visible, and should not be used as wholesale replacement for plantings. If used, small plantings should be incorporated into the design.
- iii. *Rock mulch and gravel* - Do not use rock mulch or gravel as a wholesale replacement for lawn area. If used, plantings should be incorporated into the design.

C. MULCH

Organic mulch – Organic mulch should not be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Organic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as beneath a tree canopy.

- i. *Inorganic mulch* – Inorganic mulch should not be used in highly-visible areas and should never be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Inorganic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as along a foundation wall where moisture retention is discouraged.

D. TREES

- i. *Preservation*—Preserve and protect from damage existing mature trees and heritage trees. See UDC Section 35-523 (Tree Preservation) for specific requirements.
- ii. *New Trees* – Select new trees based on site conditions. Avoid planting new trees in locations that could potentially cause damage to a historic structure or other historic elements. Species selection and planting procedure should be done in accordance with guidance from the City Arborist.
- iii. *Maintenance* – Proper pruning encourages healthy growth and can extend the lifespan of trees. Avoid unnecessary or harmful pruning. A certified, licensed arborist is recommended for the pruning of mature trees and heritage trees.

Xeriscaping & Responsible Landscaping: City of San Antonio Historic Design Guidelines Landscaping Policy Document

THE DO NOT'S

- Do not develop proposals that remove over 50% of the total green space in the front yard.
- Do not fully remove plants from the planting strip (the space between the sidewalk and street). Retaining at least 50% plantings in this area is highly encouraged to reduce the heat island, aid in rainwater absorption on streets, and create a lively pedestrian experience.
- Do not utilize gravel, decomposed granite, or other small rock ground cover as the primary element of your landscaping plan.
- Do not incorporate black, non-native, or artificially colored rocks.
- Do not incorporate rock ground cover with an overall diameter of greater than 2 inches.
- Do not incorporate large boulders or flagstone as accent pieces. Consider integrating drought-tolerant trees or low shrubbery instead to add visual diversity and interest.
- Do not incorporate excessive use of concrete or impervious (non-permeable) hardscaping. Hardscaping is best for functional purposes only: driveways, walkways, steps, and patios.

FINDINGS:

- a. The property located at 926 Lamar St is a one-story, single-family Minimal Traditional structure built c. 1955 and first appears on the 1955 Historic Aerial map. The structure features alternate 117 wood and flat lapped siding, one-over-one windows, a front-facing gable with Minimal Traditional detail, and a composition shingle roof. This property contributes to the Dignowity Hill Historic District.
- b. VIOLATION – On September 25, 2024, staff received a report of landscape modifications without a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Afterwards, staff communicated with the property owner the violation and notified them that the landscape modifications will require a COA application and review by the Compliance and Technical Advisory Board (CTAB). Staff issued a Notice of Investigation (NOI) that same day. The property owner failed to submit a COA application, and in December 2024 and January 2025, staff attempted to contact the property owner regarding the violation. An application was submitted on February 10, 2025, with a landscape site plan not to scale and reflecting modifications requiring CTAB review. OHP staff informed the property owner that CTAB review is required and has not heard from the property owner since they submitted the application.
- c. LANDSCAPE MODIFICATIONS – The applicant is requesting to replace the natural landscape in the front yard with landscape rocks. The Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements 3.A.ii. stipulates that historic lawn areas should never be reduced by more than 50%. Staff finds the wholesale installation of landscape rocks does not conform to guidelines and that the applicant should install at least 50% natural greenery.

RECOMMENDATION:

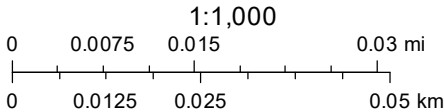
Staff recommends approval of the request, based on findings a through c, with the following stipulations:

- i. That the applicant introduce at least 50% natural greenery.
- ii. That the applicant submit a measured and to-scale landscape plan prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

City of San Antonio One Stop



March 13, 2025



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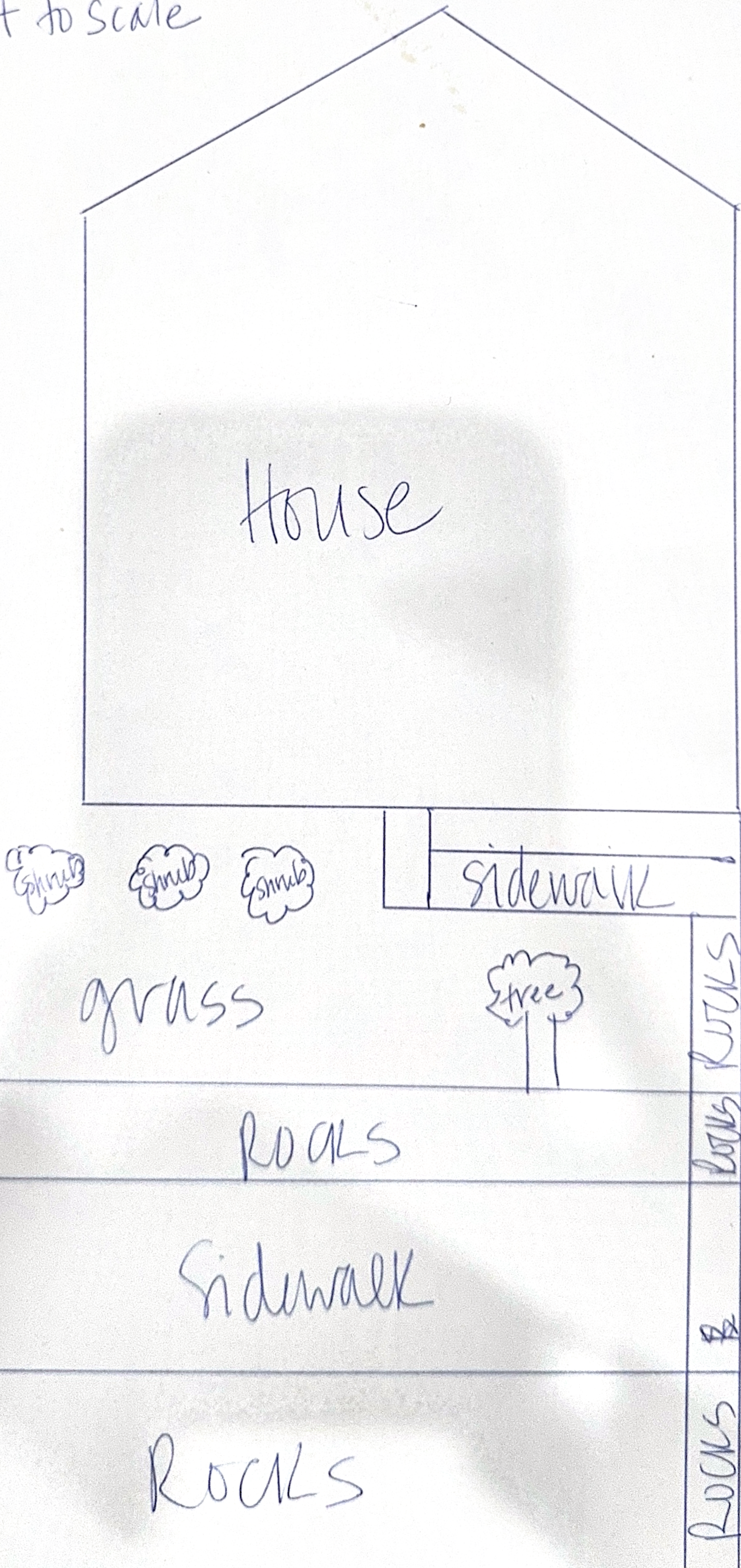








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