

**HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
COMPLIANCE AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD**

March 21, 2025

HDRC CASE NO: 2025-042
ADDRESS: 505 RIVER RD
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 6203 BLK 4 LOT S 120 OF 24 & 25, S 120 OF E 25 OF 23 S 120 OF W IRR 59.08 OF 26
ZONING: R-4, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: River Road Historic District
APPLICANT: Bernice Beck
OWNER: Bernice Beck/BECK BERNICE
TYPE OF WORK: Fence installation
APPLICATION RECEIVED: February 17, 2025
60-DAY REVIEW: April 18, 2025
CASE MANAGER: Rachel Rettaliata

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to:

1. Replace the existing rear privacy fence with a 6-foot-tall wood fence with metal posts, extending the rear fence toward E Woodlawn.
2. Install a new 5-foot-tall horizontal wood side yard fence, featuring one (1) pedestrian gate.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

1. Topography

A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- i. *Historic topography*—Avoid significantly altering the topography of a property (i.e., extensive grading). Do not alter character-defining features such as berms or sloped front lawns that help define the character of the public right-of-way. Maintain the established lawn to help prevent erosion. If turf is replaced over time, new plant materials in these areas should be low-growing and suitable for the prevention of erosion.
- ii. *New construction*—Match the historic topography of adjacent lots prevalent along the block face for new construction. Do not excavate raised lots to accommodate additional building height or an additional story for new construction.
- iii. *New elements*—Minimize changes in topography resulting from new elements, like driveways and walkways, through appropriate siting and design. New site elements should work with, rather than change, character-defining topography when possible.

2. Fences and Walls

A. HISTORIC FENCES AND WALLS

- i. *Preserve*—Retain historic fences and walls.
- ii. *Repair and replacement*—Replace only deteriorated sections that are beyond repair. Match replacement materials (including mortar) to the color, texture, size, profile, and finish of the original.
- iii. *Application of paint and cementitious coatings*—Do not paint historic masonry walls or cover them with stone facing or stucco or other cementitious coatings.

B. NEW FENCES AND WALLS

- i. *Design*—New fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character. Design of fence should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure.

- ii. *Location*—Avoid installing a fence or wall in a location where one did not historically exist, particularly within the front yard. The appropriateness of a front yard fence or wall is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences or wall should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them.
- iii. *Height*—Limit the height of new fences and walls within the front yard to a maximum of four feet. The appropriateness of a front yard fence is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them. If a taller fence or wall existed historically, additional height may be considered. The height of a new retaining wall should not exceed the height of the slope it retains.
- iv. *Prohibited materials*—Do not use exposed concrete masonry units (CMU), Keystone or similar interlocking retaining wall systems, concrete block, vinyl fencing, or chain link fencing.
- v. *Appropriate materials*—Construct new fences or walls of materials similar to fence materials historically used in the district. Select materials that are similar in scale, texture, color, and form as those historically used in the district, and that are compatible with the main structure. Screening incompatible uses—Review alternative fence heights and materials for appropriateness where residential properties are adjacent to commercial or other potentially incompatible uses.

Policy Guide for Fences in Historic Districts

When new fences are appropriate to the site-specific conditions of the property, applicants must also ensure that the style, height, and configuration of the fence is also appropriate per the Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements and the Unified Development Code 35-514.

- REAR / PRIVACY FENCE - Rear yard privacy fences should be no taller than 6 feet in height and feature wood construction. Historic evidence may support installing stone, masonry, or stucco walls. They should be set back from the front façade of the building, rather than aligning them with the front façade of the structure, to reduce their visual prominence.
- FRONT FENCE - Front yard fences should match the height of neighboring fences or be limited to 4 feet in height and be compatible with the heights of adjacent historic fences. Historic evidence may support installing stone, masonry, or stucco walls and fence bases.
- FENCE STYLES - While maintaining respect to individual architecture styles and historic districts, the most common appropriate fence type includes (a) black wrought iron, (b) painted wood picket, and (c) garden-loop.
- NONCONFORMING FENCES - Chain-link, barbed wire, corrugated metal, and make-shift fences should be avoided. Grandfathered items may be replaced with appropriate fencing, but should not be reconstructed or expanded upon.
- PEDESTRIAN GATES - Pedestrian gates should be located at the intersection the property's walkway and the public sidewalk. Pedestrian gates should relate to the design of the fence while maintaining a 4-foot height limit.
- VEHICLE GATES - Vehicle gates should be set behind the front facade plane of the house and not span across the front of the driveway. A front vehicle gate may be considered if the site features an atypical condition including: (a) a wraparound porch, (b) a narrow driveway less than 10 feet wide, and/or (c) front driveways abutting rear yards or commercial properties. Electrical, mechanical, or solar collector equipment should be concealed and minimally visible if used.

FINDINGS:

- a. The primary structure located at 505 River Road is a 1-story, single-family structure constructed circa 1930. The structure first appears on the 1931 Sanborn Map. The residence features a composition shingle hip roof with wide overhanging eaves, a deep-set front porch with classical columns, shingle cladding, and divided lite casement windows. The property is designated within the River Road Historic District.
- b. REAR FENCE REPLACEMENT – The applicant has proposed to replace the existing 6-foot-tall wood privacy fence with a new 6-foot-tall wood privacy fence with metal posts along the east (rear) property line, extending the fencing toward E Woodlawn, terminating 4 feet from the public sidewalk. The primary structure is oriented toward River Road and the side yard and rear yard faces E Woodlawn Avenue. The adjacent properties on E Woodlawn Avenue are oriented toward E Woodlawn Avenue and the proposed rear privacy fence will be in line with the front yards of adjacent properties. Guideline 2.C.ii for Site Elements states that privacy fences should not be used in front yards. Staff finds that due to the orientation of the primary structure toward River Road and

the proposed 4 foot setback from the public sidewalk, the proposed fence is generally appropriate for the property.

- c. **SIDE YARD FENCE INSTALLATION** – The applicant has proposed to install a 5-foot-tall horizontal cedar fence along the south (side) property line, extending from the rear fence toward the side of the house, turning into the house and terminating approximately 15 feet from the front façade. The applicant has proposed to install a wood pedestrian gate on the side yard fence, along E Woodlawn Avenue. Guideline 2.C.i for Site Elements states that privacy fences should be set back from the front façade of the building, rather than aligning them with the front façade of the structure to reduce their visual prominence. Staff finds that due to the orientation of the primary structure toward River Road and the proposed 4-foot setback from the public sidewalk, the proposed side yard fence installation is generally appropriate for the property.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of items 1 and 2 based on findings a through c with the following stipulation:

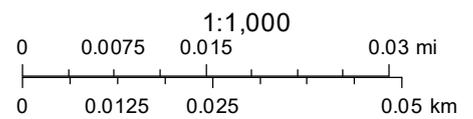
- i. That the final construction height of the approved fencing and gates may not exceed the maximum height of 6 feet at any portion of the fence. Additionally, the fencing must be permitted and meet the development standards outlined in UDC Section 35-514.

City of San Antonio One Stop



March 14, 2025

 User drawn lines



3.782

San Antonio, Tex. Vol. 2 FITZHUGH ST.

205

NEW SHEET
MAY 1924

FITZHUGH

191

RIVER FORD COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

N. ST. MARYS (JONES AV.)
E. MAGNOLIA AV.

OSTROM DR.

MISTLETOE AV. (BROAD AV.)

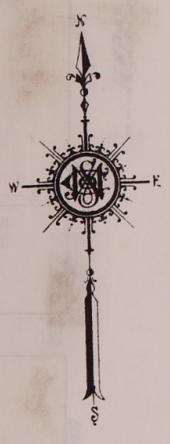
WOODLAWN ST.

214

BRACKENRIDGE PARK GOLF LINKS

Scale 100 Ft. to One Inch.

Copyright 1924 by the Sanborn Map Co.



213

0

214

193

177

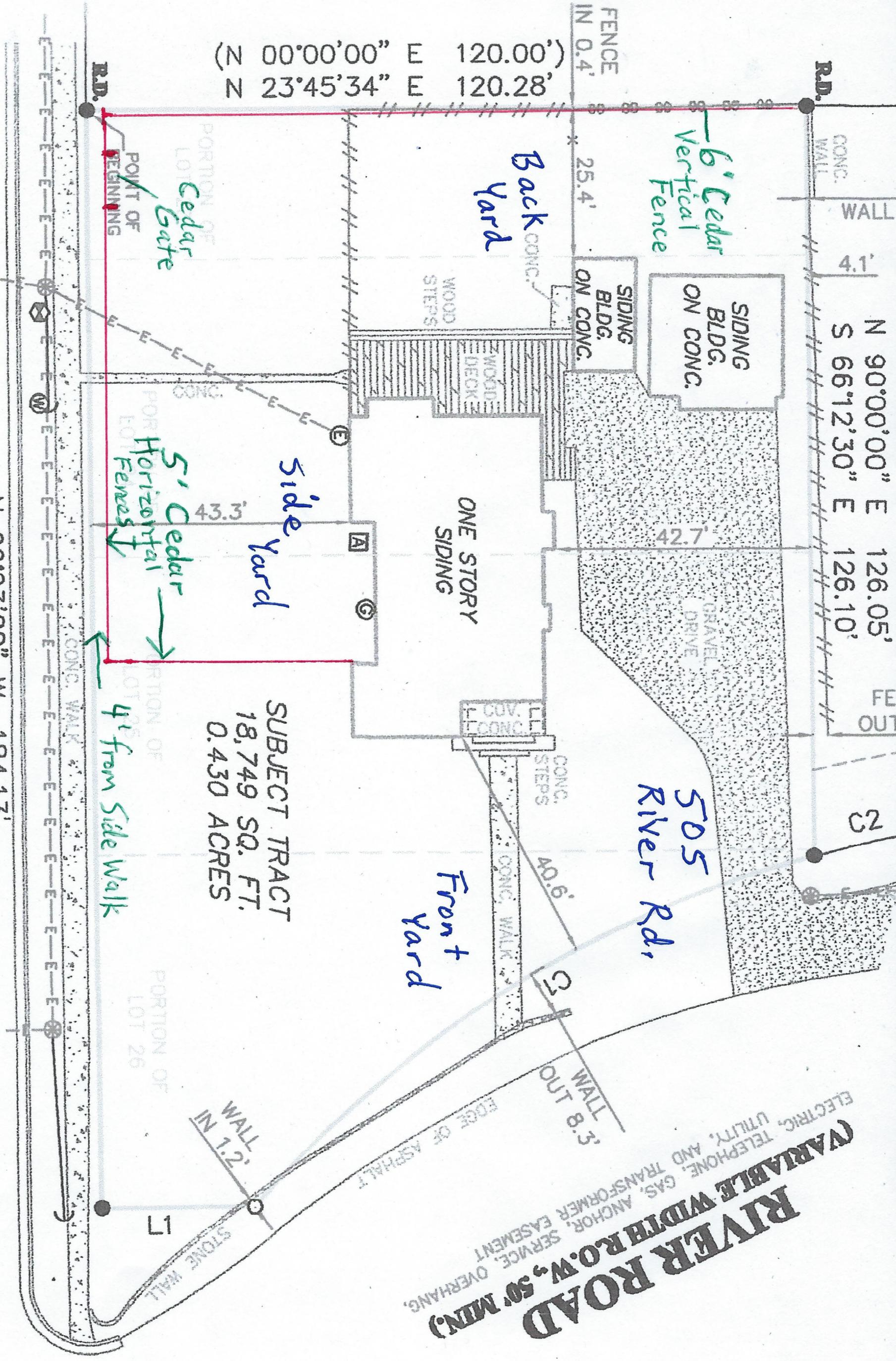
AV. B.

Original located at San Antonio Public Library Special Collections

E. WOODLAWN AVENUE
 (MCKINNEY PLACE PER PLAT) (50' R.O.W.)

N 66°23'00" W 184.13'
 (S 90°00'00" W 184.08')

(N 00°00'00" E 120.00')
 (N 23°45'34" E 120.28')



SUBJECT TRACT
 18,749 SQ. FT.
 0.430 ACRES

RIVER ROAD
 (VARIABLE WIDTH R.O.W., 50' MIN.)
 ELECTRIC, TELEPHONE, GAS, ANCHOR, SERVICE, OVERHANG,
 UTILITY, AND TRANSFORMER EASEMENT



505













