

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

December 20, 2023

HDRC CASE NO: 2023-482
ADDRESS: 251 GREENLAWN
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 8417 BLK 2 LOT 49
ZONING: R-5, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Greenlawn Estates Historic District
APPLICANT: Paul Medina
OWNER: Paul Medina
TYPE OF WORK: Front yard fence installation with a masonry knee wall and gates
APPLICATION RECEIVED: November 29, 2023
60-DAY REVIEW: January 28, 2024
CASE MANAGER: Bryan Morales

REQUEST:

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

1. Construct a brick, stone, and iron front yard fence ranging from 4'7" to 6' tall.
2. Construct three (3) red iron gates.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

1. Topography

A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- 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.
- 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.
- 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

- Preserve*—Retain historic fences and walls.
- 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.
- 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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

C. PRIVACY FENCES AND WALLS

i. *Relationship to front facade*—Set privacy fences back from the front façade of the building, rather than aligning them with the front façade of the structure to reduce their visual prominence.

ii. *Location* – Do not use privacy fences in front yards.

Policy Document: 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 in 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 of 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 façade 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 property located at 251 Greenlawn Dr is a single-family residence constructed in 2017. The structure features stone and brick cladding, three front-facing windows, and an attached front-facing three car garage. This property contributes to the Greenlawn Estates Historic District.
- b. **VIOLATION** – On November 29, 2023, the applicant submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for an unfinished front yard fence. Staff notified the property owner of the violation and scheduled the request for the December 20, 2023, HDRC hearing.
- c. **FENCE** – The applicant is requesting to construct a front yard fence ranging from 4’7” to 6’ tall. The Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements 2.B.i. states new fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character; design of the fence should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure. Site Elements 2.B.ii. states to avoid installing a fence or wall in a location where one did not historically exist, particularly within the front yard and the appropriateness of a front yard fence or wall is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. Additionally, new front yard fences should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them. Site Elements 2.B.iii. states to limit the height of new fences and walls within the front yard to a maximum of four feet. Staff finds the construction of a front yard fence ranging from 4’7” to 6’ tall does not conform to guidelines.

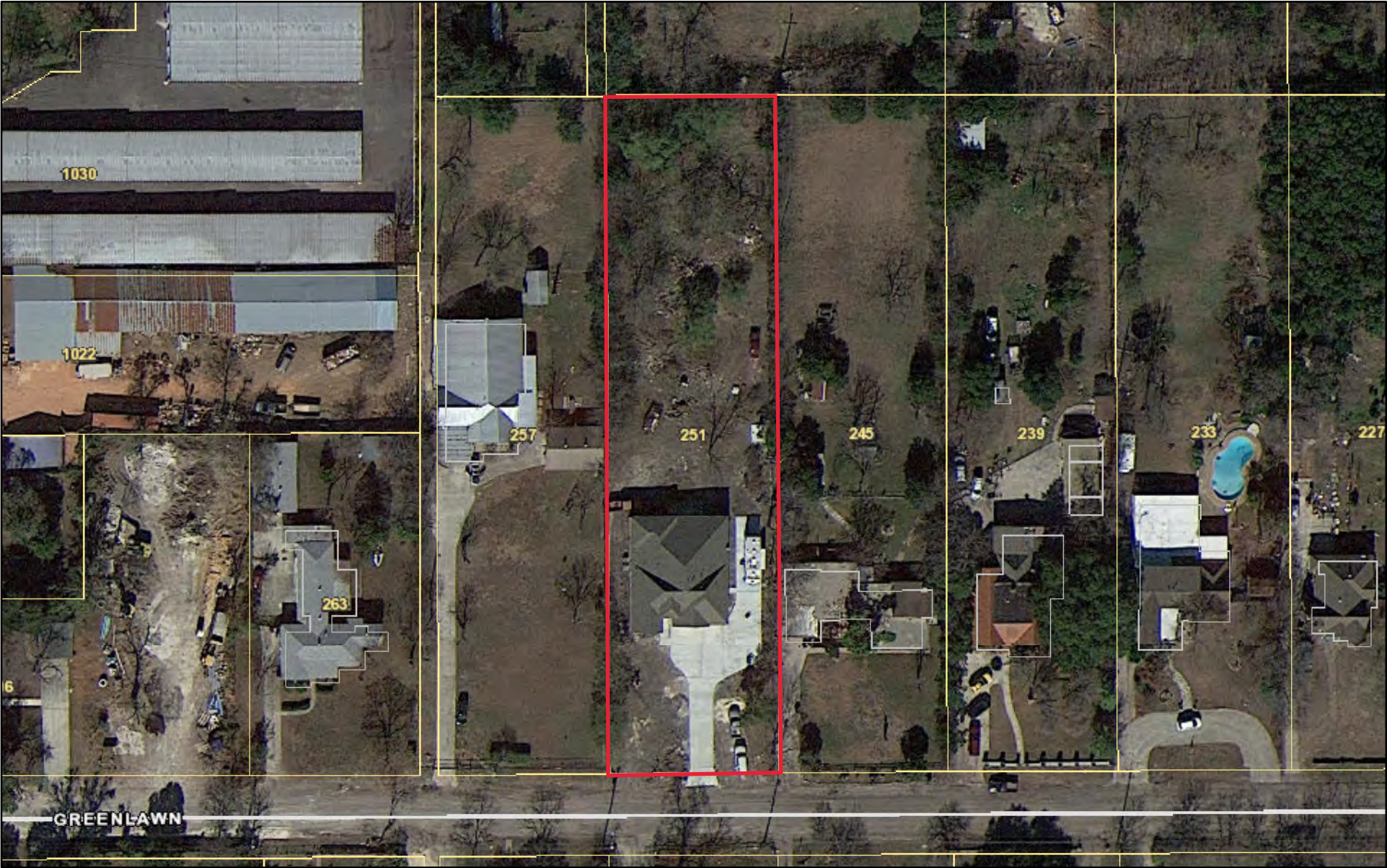
- d. FENCE (MATERIALS) – The applicant is requesting to construct a brick, stone, and iron front yard fence. Site Elements 2.B.v. states to construct new fences or walls of materials similar to fence materials historically used in the district and to select materials that are similar in scale, texture, color, and form as those historically used in the district, and that are compatible with the main structure. Staff finds the proposed materials generally not appropriate.
- e. GATE – The applicant is requesting approval to construct one pedestrian red iron gate and two vehicle red iron gates measuring between 5' to 5'6" tall. Site Elements 2.B.iii. states to limit the height of new fences and walls within the front yard to a maximum of four feet. The Policy Document – Fences in Historic Districts – lists black wrought iron as being one of the most common appropriate fence styles. Staff finds the construction of one pedestrian red iron gate and two vehicle red iron gates measuring between 5' to 5'6" tall does not conform to guidelines.
- f. GATE (MATERIALS) – The applicant is requesting to construct one pedestrian red iron gate and two vehicle red iron gates measuring between 5' to 5'6" tall. Site Elements 2.B.i. states new fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character; design of the fence should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure. Staff finds the material of the gates generally conforms to guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

- i. That the applicant construct a fence and gate that conforms to the historic district such as simple wood or split-rail fence.
- ii. That the fence and gate does not exceed four (4) feet in height.

City of San Antonio One Stop



December 14, 2023



Total number of columns = 8 Each column is 24X24

1st column to the left t is 4'7" high

2nd column is 4'8" high

3rd & 4th column is 4'10" high

5th column is 5'3" high

6th column is 5'5" high

7th column is 5'7" high

8th column is 6' high

The columns are different sizes due to living on a hill and ground is not level

Total number of gates = 3 (Red Iron)

The main driveway gate (right-side) 14'1/2" length and 5'6" high

The entrance gate is 4'0" length and 5'0" high

The 2nd driveway gate is 14' length and 5'0" high

Walls – Brick

Between the 2nd and 3rd column 11'3" length and 7" high

Between the 4th and 5th column 11'3" length and 1'0" high

Between the 6th and 7th column 15'4" length and 1'6" high

Between the 7th and 8th column 15'4" length and 2'0" high

Walls – Iron

Between the 2nd and 3rd column 11'3" length and 4'0" high

Between the 4th and 5th column 11'3" length and 4'0" high

Between the 6th and 7th column 15'4" length and 4'0" high

Between the 7th and 8th column 15'4" length and 4'0" high

Material: Stone- 8.45 tons Brick- 4 pallets Cements – 25 bags

WALLS

