

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

December 20, 2023

HDRC CASE NO: 2023-459
ADDRESS: 107 PASO HONDO
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 591 BLK 4 LOT 14
ZONING: RM-4, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 2
DISTRICT: Dignowity Hill Historic District
APPLICANT: Diego Pedraza
OWNER: Cesar Pedraza
TYPE OF WORK: Front yard fence installation and sidewalk, front steps, and walkway replacement
APPLICATION RECEIVED: November 14, 2023
60-DAY REVIEW: January 13, 2024
CASE MANAGER: Bryan Morales

REQUEST:

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

1. Replace the existing sidewalk.
2. Replace concrete front porch steps.
3. Replace a concrete front walkway.
4. Construct a metal gate and front yard fence with masonry pillars and a masonry knee-high wall.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 2, Exterior Maintenance and Alterations

7. Architectural Features: Porches, Balconies, and Porte-Cocheres

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

- i. *Existing porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres*—Preserve porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres. Do not add new porches, balconies, or porte-cocheres where not historically present.
- ii. *Balusters*—Preserve existing balusters. When replacement is necessary, replace in-kind when possible or with balusters that match the originals in terms of materials, spacing, profile, dimension, finish, and height of the railing.
- iii. *Floors*—Preserve original wood or concrete porch floors. Do not cover original porch floors of wood or concrete with carpet, tile, or other materials unless they were used historically.

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

- i. *Front porches*—Refrain from enclosing front porches. Approved screen panels should be simple in design as to not change the character of the structure or the historic fabric.
- ii. *Side and rear porches*—Refrain from enclosing side and rear porches, particularly when connected to the main porch or balcony. Original architectural details should not be obscured by any screening or enclosure materials. Alterations to side and rear porches should result in a space that functions, and is visually interpreted as, a porch.
- iii. *Replacement*—Replace in-kind porches, balconies, porte-cocheres, and related elements, such as ceilings, floors, and columns, when such features are deteriorated beyond repair. When in-kind replacement is not feasible, the design should be compatible in scale, massing, and detail while materials should match in color, texture, dimensions, and finish.
- iv. *Adding elements*—Design replacement elements, such as stairs, to be simple so as to not distract from the historic character of the building. Do not add new elements and details that create a false historic appearance.
- v. *Reconstruction*—Reconstruct porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres based on accurate evidence of the original, such as photographs. If no such evidence exists, the design should be based on the architectural style of the building and historic patterns.

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

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.

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.

5. Sidewalks, Walkways, Driveways, and Curbing

A. SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

- i. *Maintenance*—Repair minor cracking, settling, or jamming along sidewalks to prevent uneven surfaces. Retain and repair historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials—often brick or concrete—in place.
- ii. *Replacement materials*—Replace those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair. Every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material.
- iii. *Width and alignment*—Follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways. Alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree.
- iv. *Stamped concrete*—Preserve stamped street names, business insignias, or other historic elements of sidewalks and walkways when replacement is necessary.
- v. *ADA compliance*—Limit removal of historic sidewalk materials to the immediate intersection when ramps are added to address ADA requirements.

B. DRIVEWAYS

- i. *Driveway configuration*—Retain and repair in place historic driveway configurations, such as ribbon drives. Incorporate a similar driveway configuration—materials, width, and design—to that historically found on the site. Historic driveways are typically no wider than 10 feet. Pervious paving surfaces may be considered where replacement is necessary to increase stormwater infiltration.
- ii. *Curb cuts and ramps*—Maintain the width and configuration of original curb cuts when replacing historic driveways. Avoid introducing new curb cuts where not historically found.

C. CURBING

- i. *Historic curbing*—Retain historic curbing wherever possible. Historic curbing in San Antonio is typically constructed of concrete with a curved or angular profile.
- ii. *Replacement curbing*—Replace curbing in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair. Where in-kind replacement is not be feasible, use a comparable substitute that duplicates the color, texture, durability, and profile of the original. Retaining walls and curbing should not be added to the sidewalk design unless absolutely necessary.

8. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

A. HISTORIC FEATURES

- i. *Avoid damage*—Minimize the damage to the historic character and materials of the building and sidewalk while complying with all aspects of accessibility requirements.

ii. *Doors and door openings*—Avoid modifying historic doors or door openings that do not conform to the building and/or accessibility codes, particularly on the front façade. Consider using a discretely located addition as a means of providing accessibility.

B. ENTRANCES

i. *Grade changes*—Incorporate minor changes in grade to modify sidewalk or walkway elevation to provide an accessible entry when possible.

ii. *Residential entrances*—The preferred location of new ramps is at the side or rear of the building when convenient for the user.

iii. *Non-residential and mixed use entrances*—Provide an accessible entrance located as close to the primary entrance as possible when access to the front door is not feasible.

C. DESIGN

i. *Materials*—Design ramps and lifts to compliment the historic character of the building and be visually unobtrusive as to minimize the visual impact, especially when visible from the public right-of-way.

ii. *Screening*—Screen ramps, lifts, or other elements related to ADA compliance using appropriate landscape materials. Refer to Guidelines for Site Elements for additional guidance.

iii. *Curb cuts*—Install new ADA curb cuts on historic sidewalks to be consistent with the existing sidewalk color and texture while minimizing damage to the historical sidewalk.

FINDINGS:

- a. The primary structure located at 107 Paso Hondo St is a one-story, single-family Folk Victorian structure constructed c. 1904 and first appears on the 1904 Sanborn map. The property features a weathered standing seam metal roof consisting of a front-facing gable and hipped roof forms, two-over-two windows, a decorative front porch with Victorian wood details, a brick exterior, and three chimneys. This property contributes to the Dignowity Hill Historic District.
- b. VIOLATION – On November 13, 2023, staff received word work occurred on the property without a Certificate of Appropriateness. Staff issued a Stop Work Order the same day to the property owner regarding the construction of a front yard fence. After further review, staff notified the property owner that the replacement of the concrete front porch steps, walkway, and sidewalk were also completed without a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- c. SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT – The applicant is requesting approval to replace the existing concrete sidewalk. The Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements 5.A.i. states to repair minor cracking, settling, or jamming along sidewalks to prevent uneven surfaces and to retain and repair historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials – often brick or concrete – in place. Site Elements 5.A.ii. states to replace those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair and that every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material. Site Elements 5.A.iii. states to follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways and to alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree. Site Elements 5.A.iv. states to preserve stamped street names, business insignias, or other historic elements of sidewalks and walkways when replacement is necessary. Staff finds the replacement of the existing concrete sidewalk generally appropriate.
- d. FRONT PORCH STEPS REPLACEMENT – The applicant is requesting approval to replace the existing concrete front porch steps. The Historic Design Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 7.B.v. states to reconstruct porch elements based on accurate evidence of the original, such as photographs. Staff finds the replacement of the concrete front porch steps generally appropriate.
- e. FRONT WALKWAY REPLACEMENT – The applicant is requesting approval to replace the existing concrete walkway. Site Elements 5.A.i. states to repair minor cracking, settling, or jamming along sidewalks to prevent uneven surfaces and to retain and repair historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials – often brick or concrete – in place. Site Elements 5.A.ii. states to replace those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair and that every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material. Site Elements 5.A.iii. states to follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways and to alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree. Site Elements 5.A.iv. states to preserve stamped street names, business insignias, or other historic elements of sidewalks and walkways when replacement is necessary. Staff finds the replacement of the existing concrete walkway generally appropriate.
- f. FENCE – The applicant is requesting approval to construct a metal front yard fence with masonry pillars and a masonry knee-high wall. The applicant has not provided to staff a site plan or measurements concerning the proposed fence’s dimensions. 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 installation of a metal front yard fence with masonry pillars and a masonry knee-high wall generally does not conform to guidelines.

- g. GATE – The applicant is requesting approval to construct one pedestrian metal gate. The applicant has not provided to staff a site plan or measurements concerning the proposed gate's dimensions. 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.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 metal gate generally conforms to guidelines; however, the height should not exceed four feet.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of items 1 through 3, based on findings a through e, with the following stipulations:

- i. That the applicant submit to staff a measured site plan.
- ii. That the applicant utilize a profile and finish found historically in Dignowity Hill Historic District.

Staff does not recommend approval of item 4, based on findings a, f, and g. Staff recommends the applicant submit a fence system to staff that conforms to guidelines.

City of San Antonio One Stop



December 14, 2023



