

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

January 19, 2022

HDRC CASE NO: 2022-033
ADDRESS: 125 W GRAMERCY PLACE
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 6382 BLK 2 LOT 6,7 & 8
ZONING: R-5, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Monte Vista Historic District
APPLICANT: Alan Hicks/HICKS DALE & THERESA ERIN
OWNER: Alan Hicks/HICKS DALE & THERESA ERIN
TYPE OF WORK: Rear fence and wall modifications
APPLICATION RECEIVED: November 08, 2021
60-DAY REVIEW: Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders
CASE MANAGER: Rachel Rettaliata

REQUEST:

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

1. Remove the existing chain link fencing on top of the stone wall at the rear of the east property line and increase the height of the 3-foot-tall rock wall to 6 feet in height with in-kind materials.
2. Remove the existing stone wall along the north (rear) property line and install a 6-foot-tall wood privacy fence with a pedestrian gate.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

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.

FINDINGS:

- a. The primary structure located at 125 W Gramercy is a 2-story residential structure constructed circa 1929 in the Colonial style. The home features a side gable composition shingle roof, chimneys on the east and west elevations, brick cladding, ganged windows on the second floor and divided lite windows non the first floor, decorative shutters, and a prominent front entry with pilasters. The structure is contributing to the Monte Vista Historic District.
- b. WALL MODIFICATION: EAST – The applicant has proposed to remove the existing chain link fencing on top of the stone wall at the rear of the east property line and increase the height of the 3-foot-tall stone wall to 6 feet in height with in-kind materials. Guideline 2.B.i for Site Elements states that new fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character. Guideline 2.A.ii for Site Elements states that replacement materials (including mortar) should be matched to the color, texture, size, profile, and finish of the original. Design of fence should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure. The existing chain link fencing mounted to the stone wall is a non-compliant condition and staff finds that the removal of the chain link fencing and the extension of the stone wall to 6 feet in height with in-kind material is appropriate.
- c. WALL MODIFICATION – NORTH – The applicant has proposed to remove the existing stone wall along the north (rear) property line and install a 6-foot-tall wood privacy fence with a pedestrian gate. Guideline 2.A.i for Site Elements states that historic fences and walls should be retained. Guideline 2.A.ii recommends that only the deteriorated sections of historic fences and walls that are deteriorated beyond repair should be replaced. Replacement materials should match the color, texture, size, profile, and finish of the original. Staff finds that the removal of the existing stone wall along the north (rear) property line is not consistent with the Guidelines. Extending the stone wall to match the proposed modification on the east property line would be appropriate.
- d. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL – The applicant has proposed to install a 6-foot-tall wood privacy fence on the west property line flush against the existing contemporary brick wall, which is located on the neighboring property. This scope of work is eligible for administrative approval and does not require HDRC review.

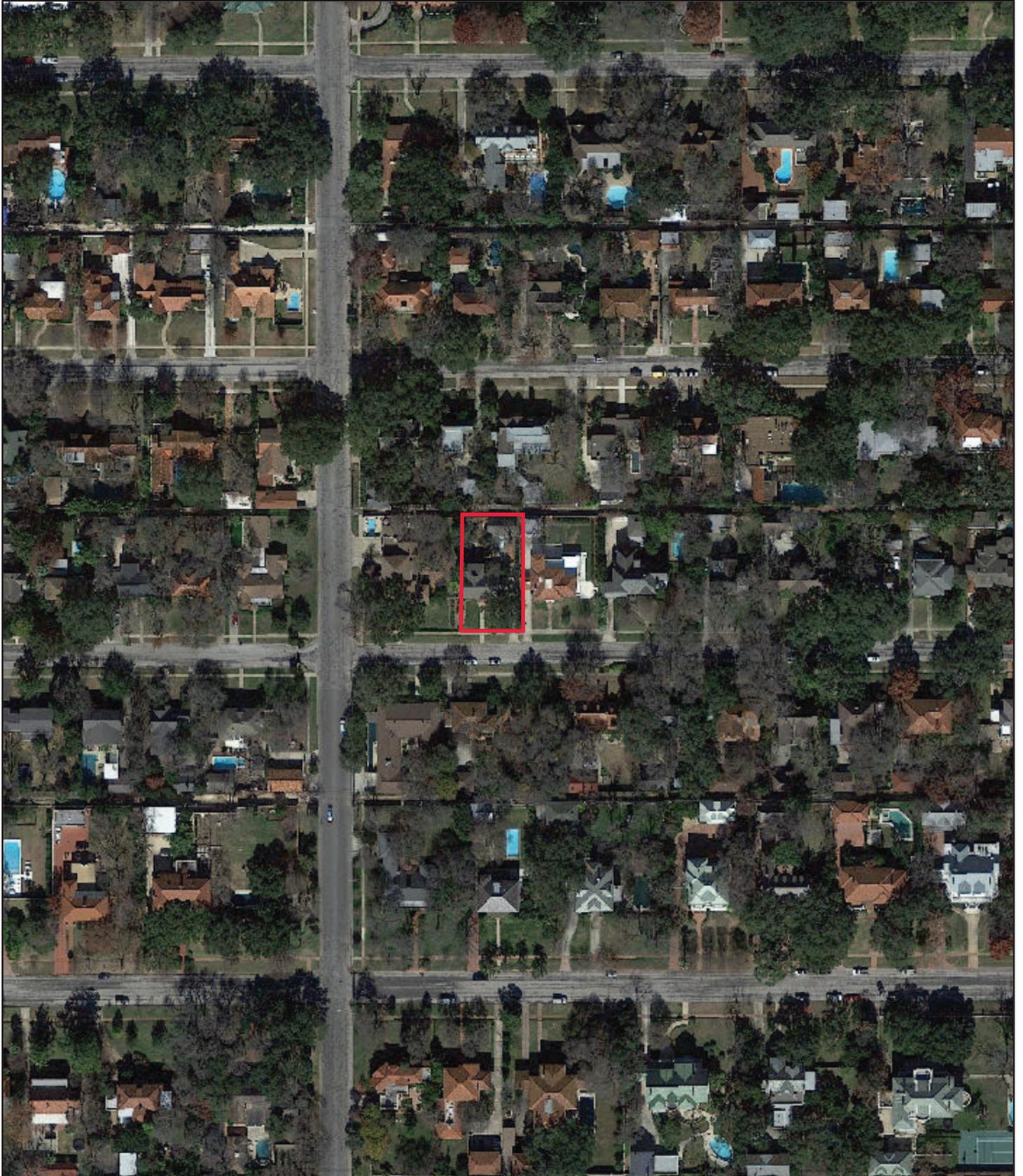
RECOMMENDATION:

Item 1, staff recommends approval of the wall modification on the east property line based on findings a through b with the following stipulations:

- i. That the wall extension, including the mortar, matches the color, texture, size, profile, and finish of the original stone wall.
- ii. That the final construction height of the approved wall may not exceed the maximum height of 6 feet as approved by the HDRC at any portion of the fence. Additionally, the wall modification must be permitted and meet the development standards outlined in UDC Section 35-514.

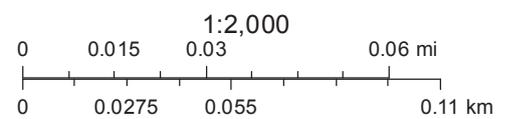
Item 2, staff does not recommend approval of the wall removal and replacement on the north (rear) property line based on finding c. Staff recommends that the existing stone wall is retained.

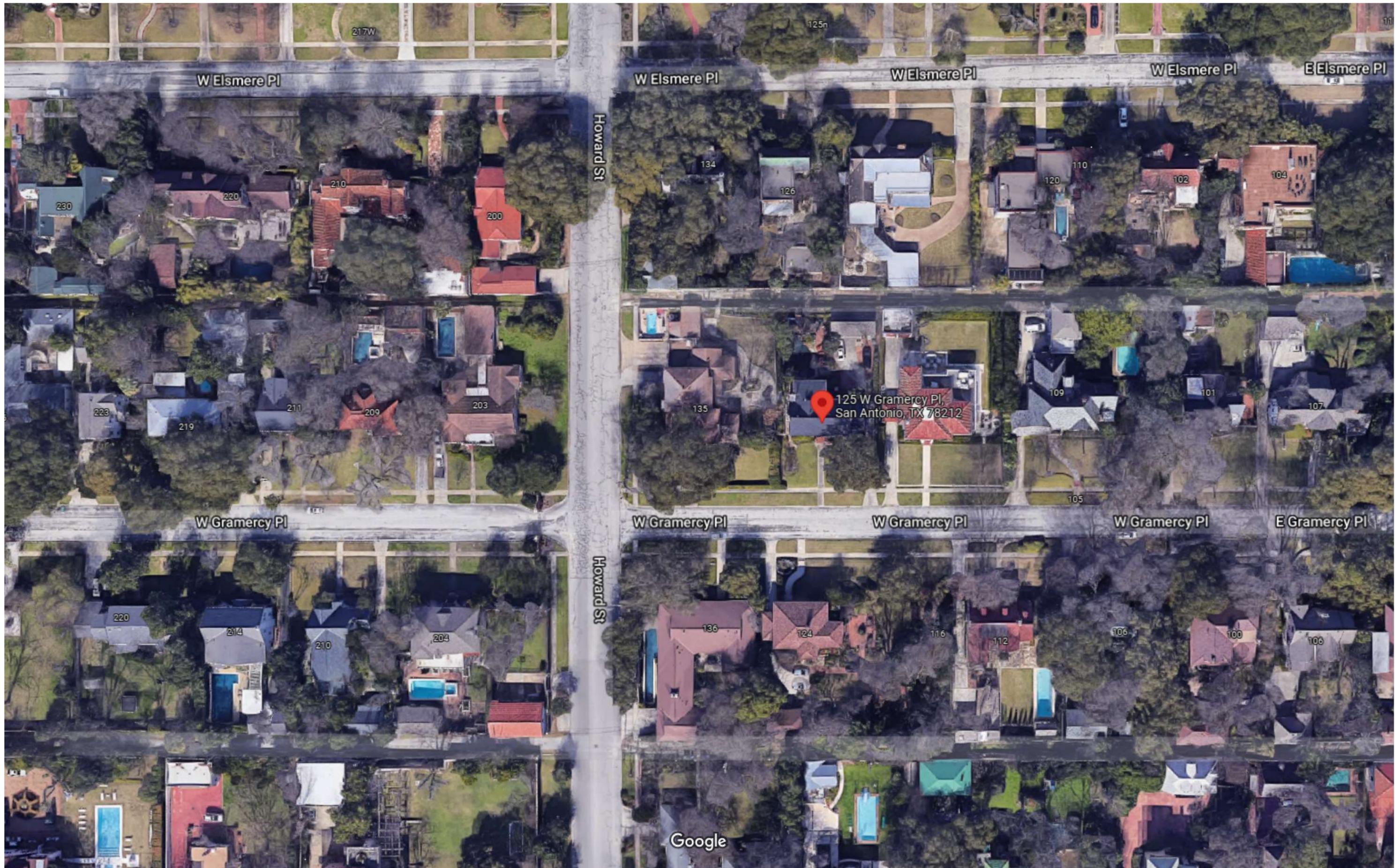
City of San Antonio One Stop



January 14, 2022

— User drawn lines





Google



125 W Gramercy Pl,
San Antonio, TX 78212

Google

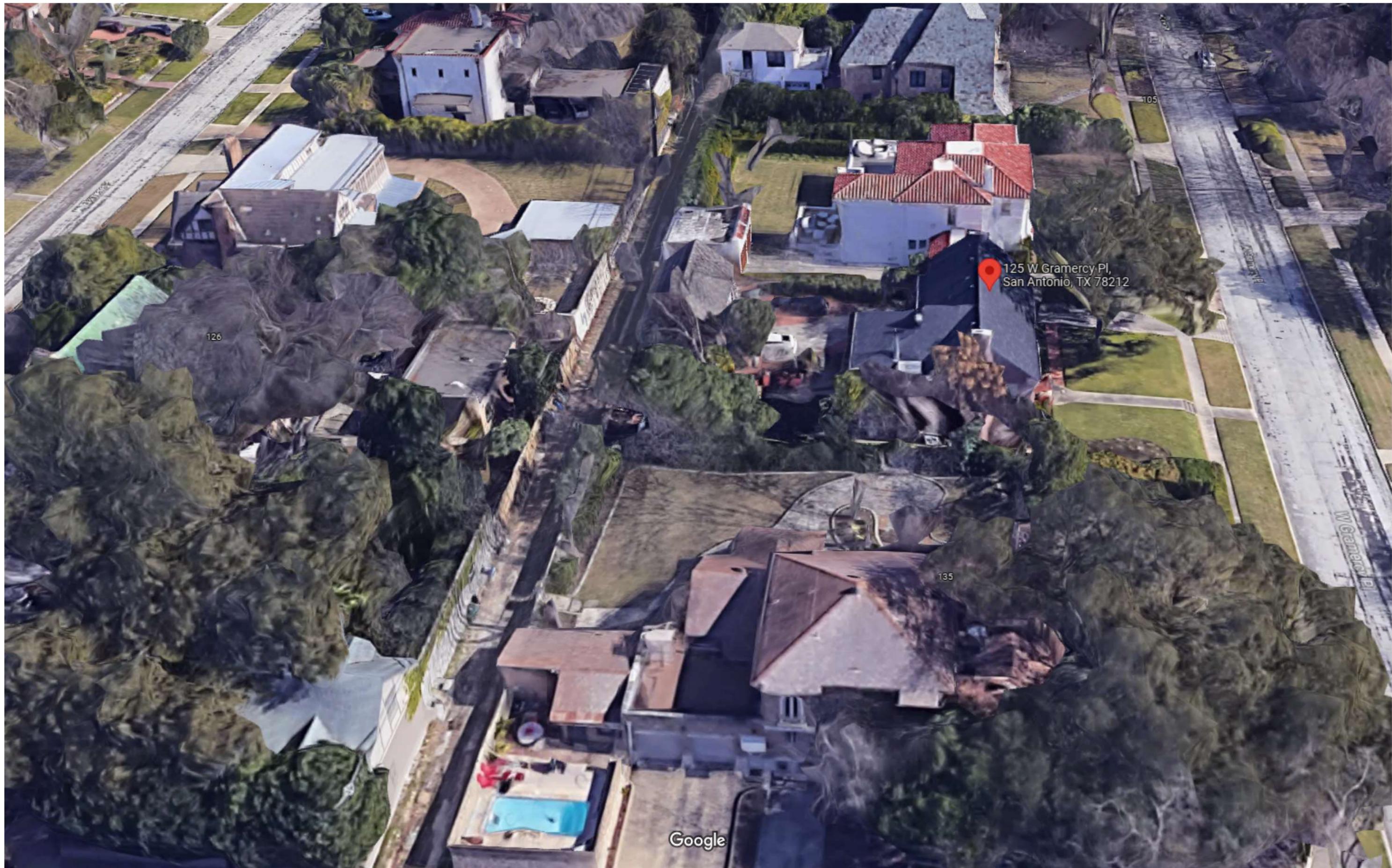


125 W Gramercy Pl,
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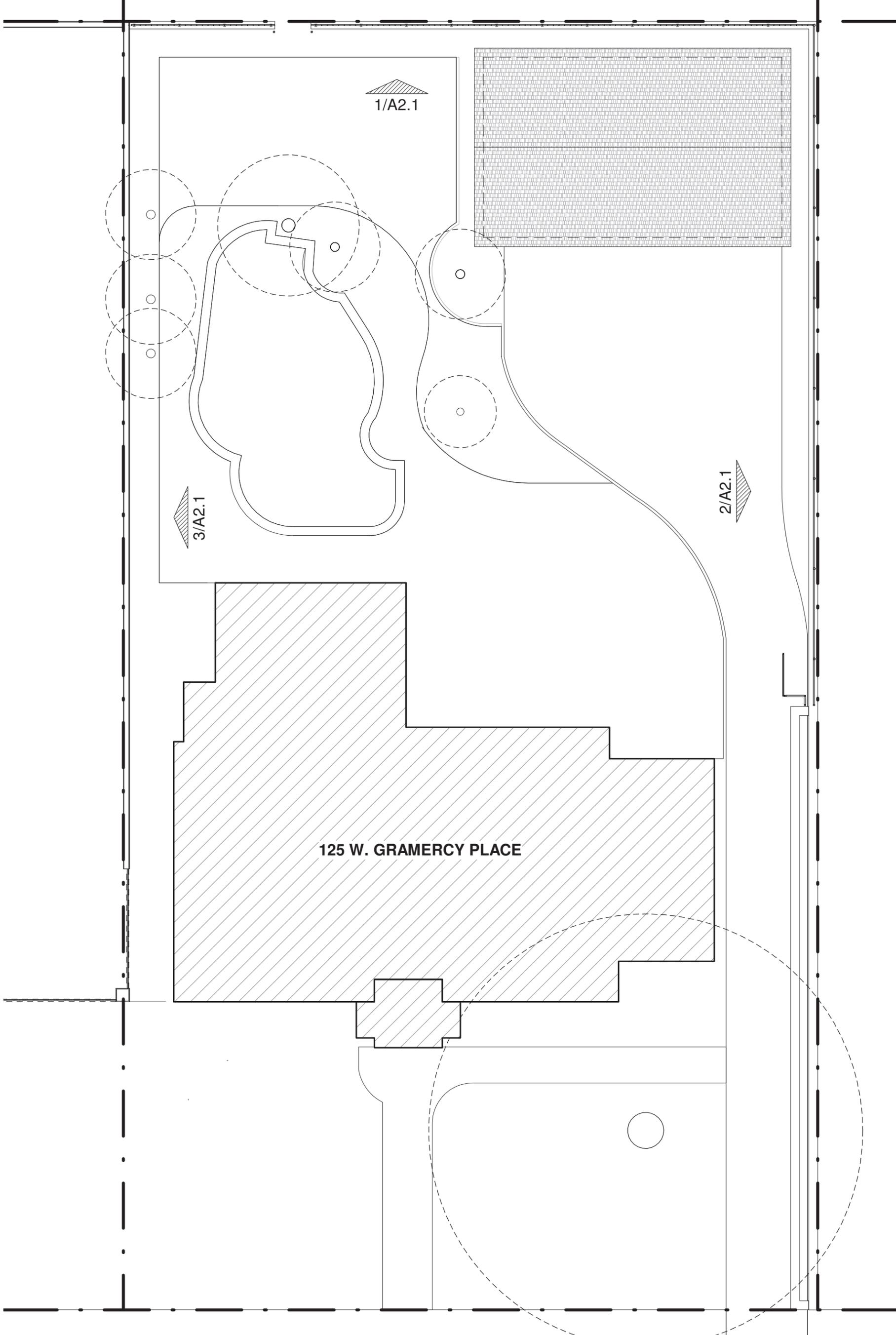
125 W Gramercy Pl,
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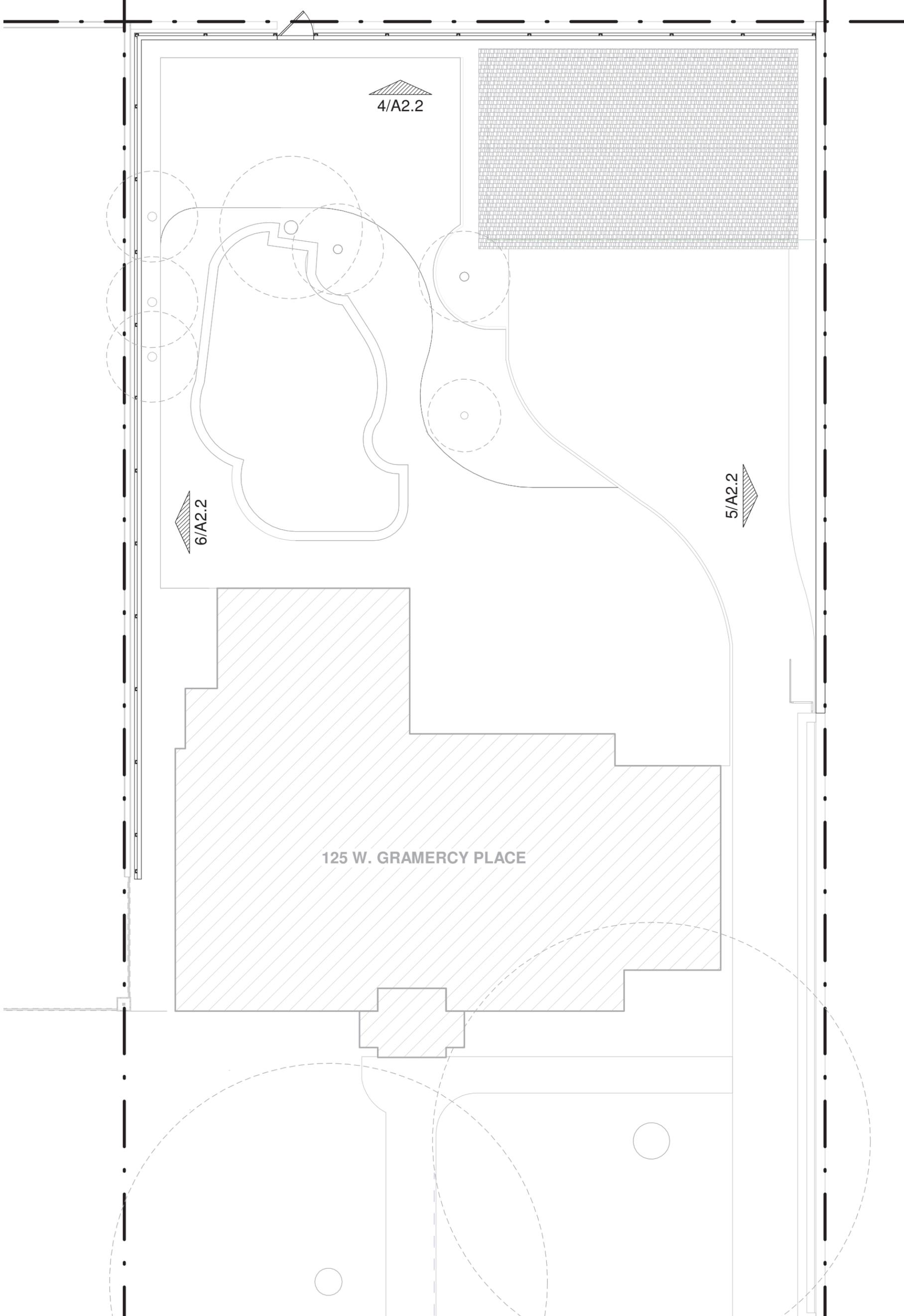


1 SITE PLAN - EXISTING

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

GRAMERCY PL.

125 GRAMERCY PLACE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78212



TRUE
NORTH

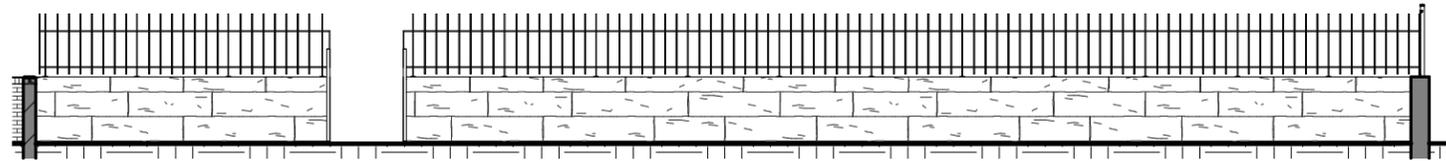


1 SITE PLAN - NEW

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

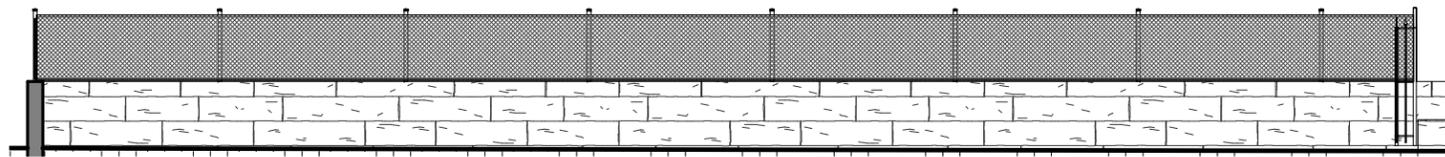
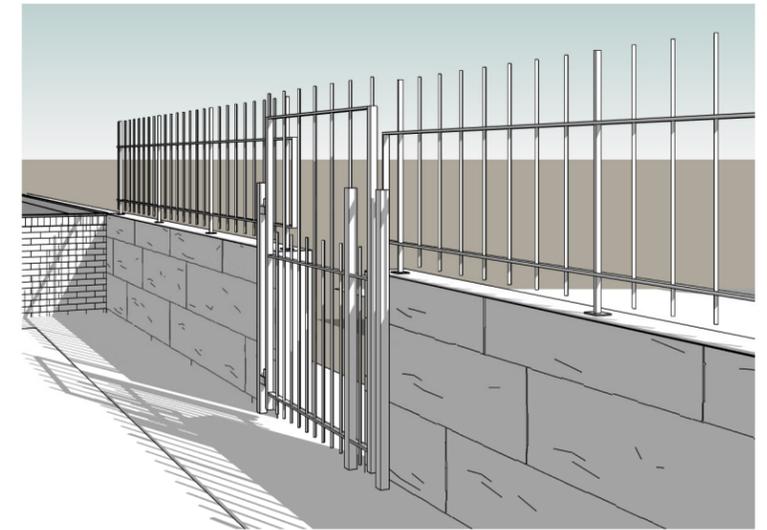
GRAMERCY PL.

125 GRAMERCY PLACE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78212



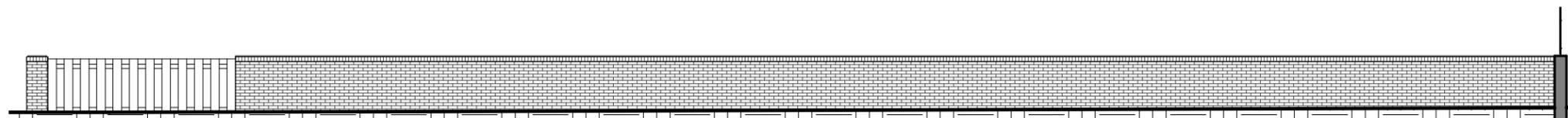
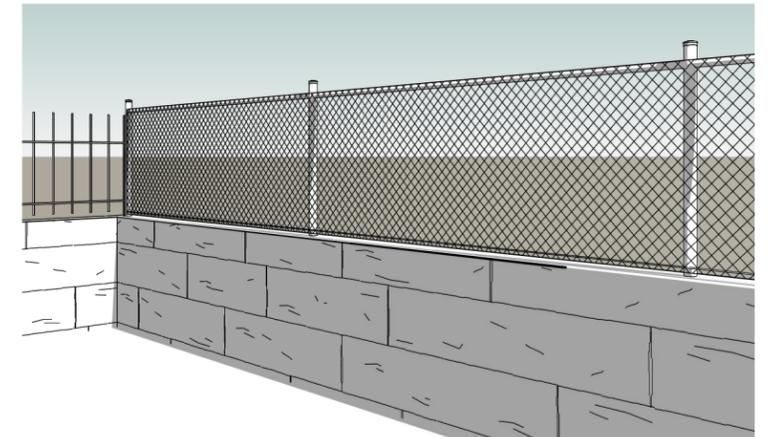
1 NORTH WALL - ELEVATION EXISTING

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"



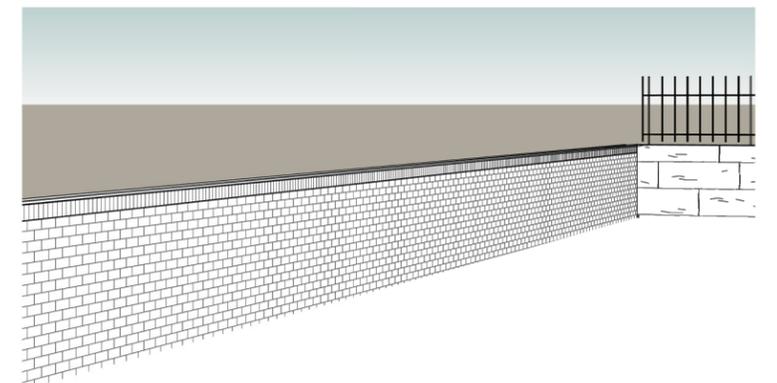
2 EAST WALL - ELEVATION - EXISTING

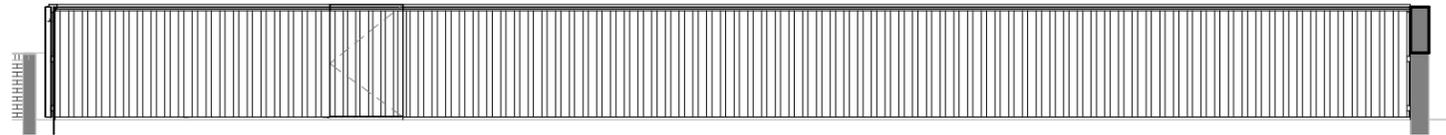
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3 WEST WALL ELEVATION - EXISTING

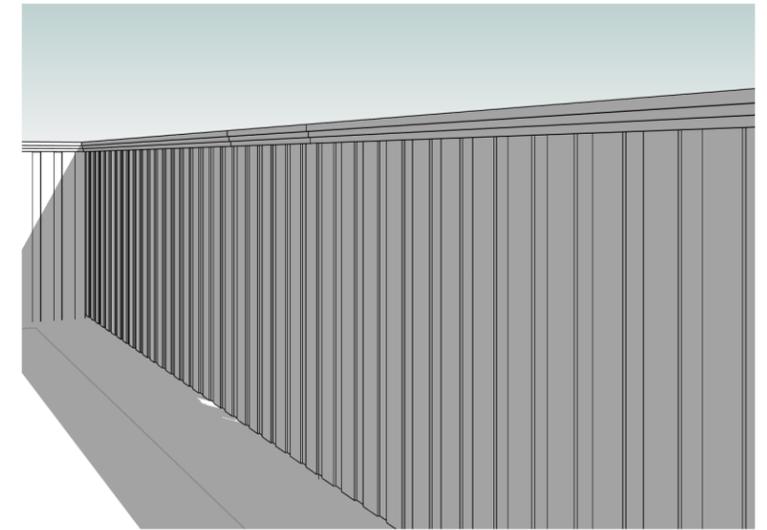
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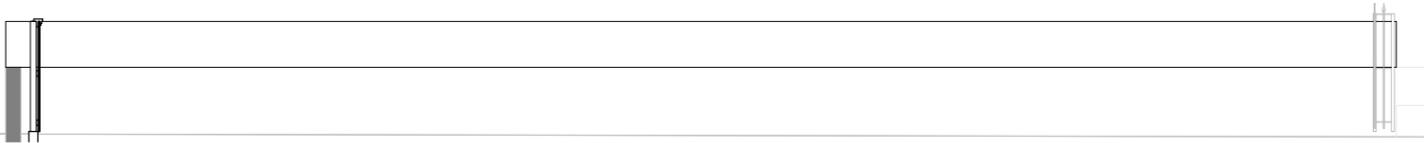


4 NORTH WALL - ELEVATION - New

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

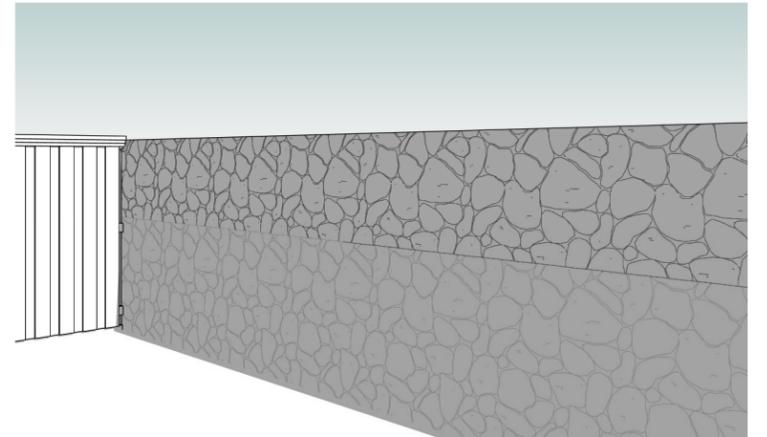


BOARD ON BOARD WOOD FENCE

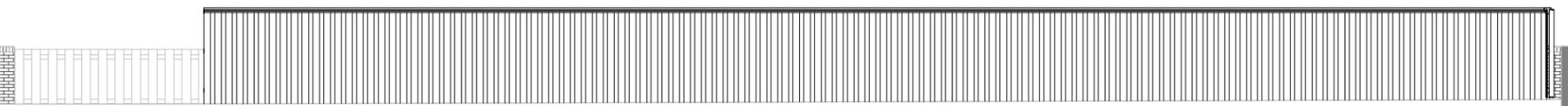


5 EAST WALL - ELEVATION - New

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

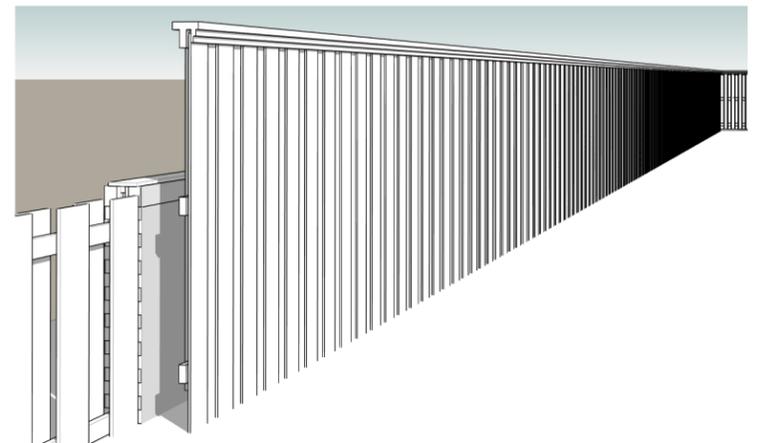


NEW STONE PRIVACY FENCE



6 WEST WALL ELEVATION - New

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"



BOARD ON BOARD WOOD PRIVACY FENCE



















This is a request to install backyard fencing at 125 West Gramercy Place. No fencing currently exists in front of the House, and none would be added as a result of this project. This request is based on 3 Specific elements. 1) an effort to eliminate an unsightly and inconsistent patchwork of three different fence styles; 2) to provide privacy for my wife, my daughters, daughters in law and new baby granddaughters who all congregate and swim in the backyard pool; 3) to address a safety issue on the East side of the property for small children and to address a safety issue on the west side related to a large aggressive dog.

This request is based upon the following factors and current conditions.

1. The rear fencing is an amalgamation of three different fence types and structures added at different times long after the completion of the home in 1929.
 - a. **The East fence** line contains a low rock wall that extends from the street to the drive gates for both 125 West and the adjacent property., 117 West. See Photos 6267 and 6260. See Old Elevation drawing for East side, 21.04.02 A1.2.
 - i. Behind the Drive Gates , the rock wall extends to the rear (north) property line at an elevation of about 3 feet on the west Side (the 125 side), but is substantially lower on the 117 side. See Photos 6267 and 6260. An ugly chain link fence was added to the top of the rock wall behind the drive gates at some point., most likely for safety and security because pets or small children could scale the fence from the 117 side of the fence.
 - ii. **The Proposal** for the East side envisions removing the chain link and with matching materials and construction techniques, raising the height of the fence behind the drive gates to 6', as measured from the 125 West side. See New Elevation East Side. 21.04.18 A1.2
 1. The residents of 117, have small grandchildren and are concerned they may fall over the wall, are completely in agreement with this proposal.
 2. There are many rock walls of virtually identical style along Gramercy as part of both side and rear property line fences and throughout the neighborhood. Many of those exceed 6' in height. This alteration will copy the existing rock wall and once completed will be virtually undetectable as a later modification once it weathers in.
 - b. **The West Fence** line, abutting the property designated as 135 West Gramercy, contains a low brick wall, See Photos 6265 and 6266 and Old Elevation Drawing for the West Fence, 21.04.02 A1.2.
 - i. This fence technically sits on the property of 117 West, based on the survey of 125 West accomplished at purchase. The brick , while resembling the brick of 135 West is not a true match and is a later addition, though the timing is not known. This

fence terminates at the West corner of the structure at 125 West and a wrought Iron gate which matches the drive gate exists. Behind the gate , the first 10' of the fence is a wooden structure. After that the brick section of the wall begins. See Photo 6266 and Old West elevation, 21.04.02 A1.2.

- ii. **The Proposal** for the West side envisions installing a 6' wood on wood fence, on the 125 West side of the wall, which would be installed flush against the existing brick wall. The pickets on the 135 West side would terminate at the top of the brick wall, giving it a finished look. The neighbors at 135 West have a large Rotweiller who has scaled the existing low wall on occasion. The elevated fence will protect small children in the backyard by keeping the aggressive dog out. The neighbors at 135 West are in complete agreement with this proposal.
- c. **The North Fence** line, abuts the rear alley. The existing fence here is a combination of a rock wall, approximately 4' in height, topped by a decorative wrought iron addition of approximately another 3'. See Old Elevation North Wall, 21.04.02 A1.2 and Photos 6261, 6262, and 6264.
 - i. **The Proposal for the North fence** envisions removing the wrought iron and with matching materials and construction techniques, raising the height of the fence behind the drive gates to 6', as measured from the 125 West side. This would allow a 6' high perimeter fence that would eliminate the ability of anyone in the alley from gazing into the back yard and thus completing the goal of privacy, and would aesthetically tie the back fence to the east fence. See New elevation North side. 21.04.18 A1.2

The contractors for the East and North side rock project have recently completed a rock wall repair at 117 West and their attention to detail and the use of identical rock and aging techniques with the concrete make the new wall match the existing wall they were repairing. It is impossible to tell where the old ends and the new begins.

As the owner, I have made myself aware of the details of the Office of Historic Preservation "Fences in Historic Districts" rules and ordinances and have made sure the contractors are aware and that they will be followed in every detail.