

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

June 03, 2015

Agenda Item No: 32

HDRC CASE NO: 2015-218
ADDRESS: 1950 W MAGNOLIA AVE
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 1961 BLK 9 LOT 14 & P-105 (PT OF ALLEY)
ZONING: R6 H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 7
DISTRICT: Monticello Park Historic District
APPLICANT: Alicia Garza
TYPE OF WORK: Landscaping
REQUEST:

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

Install a retaining wall to bank the soil in the front yard, from the curb to the end of the property line (facing Magnolia St.) with railroad ties.

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.

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.

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*.

FINDINGS:

- a. Consistent with the Guidelines for Site Elements, sloped front lawns are a character defining feature of Monticello Park Historic District that should be preserved. Topographic features, such as sloped front lawns help define the unique character of the district, street and block. Altering these features, such as through the installation of a retaining wall, interrupts the visual continuity of the historic streetscape and detracts from the character of the district.
- b. Lawns or low-plantings that are well maintained prevent erosion of sloped front yards.
- c. The property does not feature any existing type of retaining wall. Although retaining walls can be found on West

Magnolia, none of the walls existed historically or have received approval from the HDRC. New retaining walls should not be introduced. The proposed alteration would alter the topography of the site. The proposed railroad ties would not be consistent with the Guidelines for site elements 1.A.i.

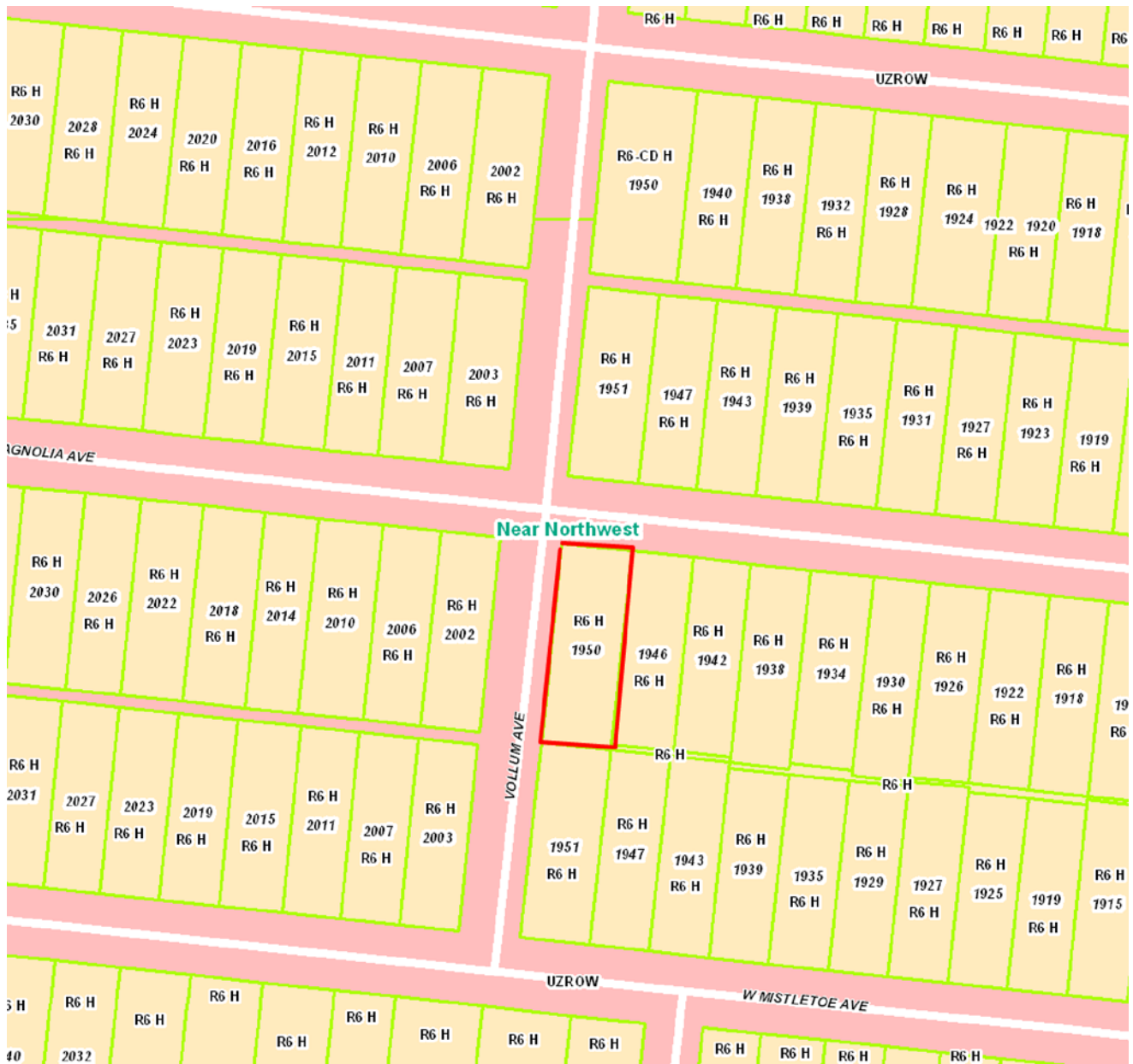
- d. The proposed use of railroad ties would not respond to the established character of the street and would not be compatible with the existing landscape. The proposed alteration is not consistent with the guidelines for Site Elements 1.Bi-iv.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff does not recommend approval based on items a through d.

CASE MANAGER:

Alyson Smith



1950 W. Magnolia

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