

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

September 16, 2015

Agenda Item No: 17

HDRC CASE NO: 2015-350
ADDRESS: 728 E GUENTHER ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 2881 BLK 6 LOT 14
ZONING: RM4 H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: King William Historic District
APPLICANT: Cynthia Miller
OWNER: Cynthia Miller
TYPE OF WORK: Landscaping, fencing
REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install the following landscaping items to be incorporated into the new construction at 728 E Guenther:

1. Install a lawn of St. Augustine grass in both the front and rear yard.
2. Install a new Red Oak in the front yard.
3. Install shrubbery in along the front of the house east of the proposed brick paver walkway.
4. Install a wrought iron fence in the front yard to be three feet in height.
5. Install a cedar fence in the side and rear yard.
6. Install a concrete ribbon driveway on the west side of the property.
7. Install a brick paver walkway from the sidewalk to the front porch.
8. Install a brick paver parking immediately east of the proposed ribbon driveway.

The installation of a concrete sidewalk at the public right of way as well as driveway approach and apron are not a part of this request.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

2. Fences and Walls

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.

3. Landscape Design

A. PLANTINGS

- ii. Historic Lawns*—Do not fully remove and replace traditional lawn areas with impervious hardscape. Limit the removal of lawn areas to mulched planting beds or pervious hardscapes in locations where they would historically be found, such as along fences, walkways, or drives. Low-growing plantings should be used in historic lawn areas; invasive or large-scale species should be avoided. Historic lawn areas should never be reduced by more than 50%.
- iii. Native xeric plant materials*—Select native and/or xeric plants that thrive in local conditions and reduce watering usage. See UDC Appendix E: San Antonio Recommended Plant List—All Suited to Xeriscape Planting Methods, for a list of appropriate materials and planting methods. Select plant materials with a similar character, growth habit, and light requirements as those being replaced.
- iv. Plant palettes*—If a varied plant palette is used, incorporate species of taller heights, such informal elements should be restrained to small areas of the front yard or to the rear or side yard so as not to obstruct views of or otherwise distract from the historic structure.
- v. Maintenance*—Maintain existing landscape features. Do not introduce landscape elements that will obscure the historic structure or are located as to retain moisture on walls or foundations (e.g., dense foundation plantings or vines) or as to cause damage.

B. ROCKS OR HARDSCAPE

- i. Impervious surfaces* —Do not introduce large pavers, asphalt, or other impervious surfaces where they were not historically located.
- ii. Pervious and semi-pervious surfaces*—New pervious hardscapes should be limited to areas that are not highly visible, and should not be used as wholesale replacement for plantings. If used, small plantings should be incorporated into the design.

D. TREES

- ii. New Trees* – Select new trees based on site conditions. Avoid planting new trees in locations that could potentially cause damage to a historic structure or other historic elements. Species selection and planting procedure should be done in accordance with guidance from the City Arborist.

5. Sidewalks, Walkways, Driveways and Curbing

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.

A. SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

- 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.

FINDINGS:

- a. The applicant has proposed a scope of work that consists of various landscaping requests that are to coincide with the completion of construction of the single family residence on the lot.
- b. The applicant has proposed to install St. Augustine grass in both the front and rear yards covering a majority of the proposed lawn area. In addition to this, the applicant has proposed to plant a new Red Oak tree in the front yard and native South Texan shrubbery and flowering plants. This is consistent with the Guidelines for Site Elements 3.A. and 3.D.
- c. In the front yard, the applicant has proposed to install a wrought iron fence to be three feet in height. The applicant has noted that the proposed fence will border the public right of way at the sidewalk and the neighboring properties on both the east and west sides. Per the Guidelines for Site Elements 2.B.ii., new fences should be constructed in locations where the historically exist, should not exceed four feet in height and should be constructed of materials found historically throughout the district. The applicant's proposal is consistent with the Guidelines.
- d. In the rear yard, the applicant has proposed to construct a cedar privacy fence along the side and rear property lines. At this time, the applicant has not proposed an overall height, however, per the UDC Section 35-514, privacy fences may not exceed six feet in overall height at any location. The applicant's proposed location as well as materials are consistent with the Guidelines for Site Elements 2.B.
- e. Per the Guidelines for Site Elements 5.B.iii., a historic alignment and configuration as well as materials, width and design should be incorporated into new driveways. Typically, historic driveway width is ten feet. The applicant has proposed to install a ribbon driveway, which are prominently featured throughout King William, however has not noted the proposed width. Staff recommends approval of the proposed ribbon driveway with the stipulation that it be no wider than ten feet.
- f. Regarding the proposed ribbon driveway, the applicant has not noted a material to install between the two ribbon strips. A pervious or semi-pervious material such as decomposed granite is appropriate.
- g. To the east of the proposed ribbon driveway, the applicant has proposed to install a paved brick area to share a curb cut with the ribbon driveway and function as a parking location. According to the Guidelines for Site Elements 5.B.ii., the configuration of historic curb cuts should be retained. While the lot does not currently feature a curb cut, the applicant should propose a curb cut that is in keeping with the historic examples provided on E Guenther in both width and profile. Typically, curb cuts along E Guenther are approximately ten to twelve feet in width.
- h. Homes on E Guenther feature both street parking and on-site driveway parking, however additional front yard parking is not typical nor historically appropriate. The Guidelines for Site Elements 7.A.ii., state that off-street parking should not be added within the front yard setback as to not disrupt the continuity of the streetscape. Staff finds that driveway parking is appropriate, however the introduction of a front yard parking location that is not historic to King William is not in keeping with the Historic Design Guidelines nor the precedent for on-site parking.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of items #1 through #7 based on findings a through g with the following stipulations:

- i. That the overall height of the proposed privacy fence not exceed six feet above grade at any location.
- ii. That the overall width of the proposed ribbon drive not exceed ten feet in width.
- iii. That the applicant install a curb cut that is in keeping with the historic precedent in profile and materials.

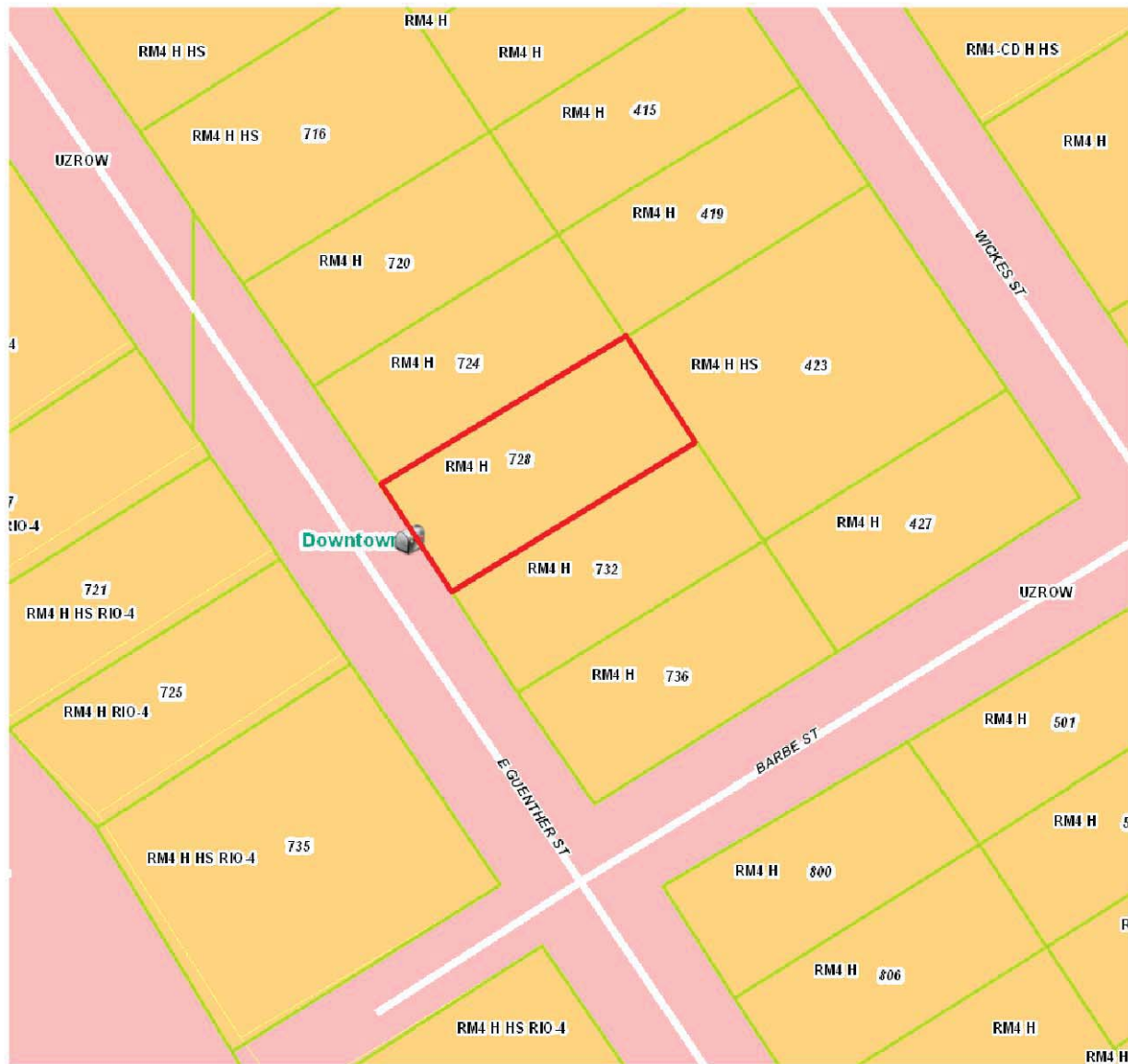
Staff does not recommend approval of item #8 based on finding h.

CASE COMMENT:

The final construction height of an approved fence may not exceed the maximum height as approved by the HDRC at any portion of the fence. Additionally, all fences must be permitted and meet the development standards outlined in UDC Section 35-514.

CASE MANAGER:

Edward Hall

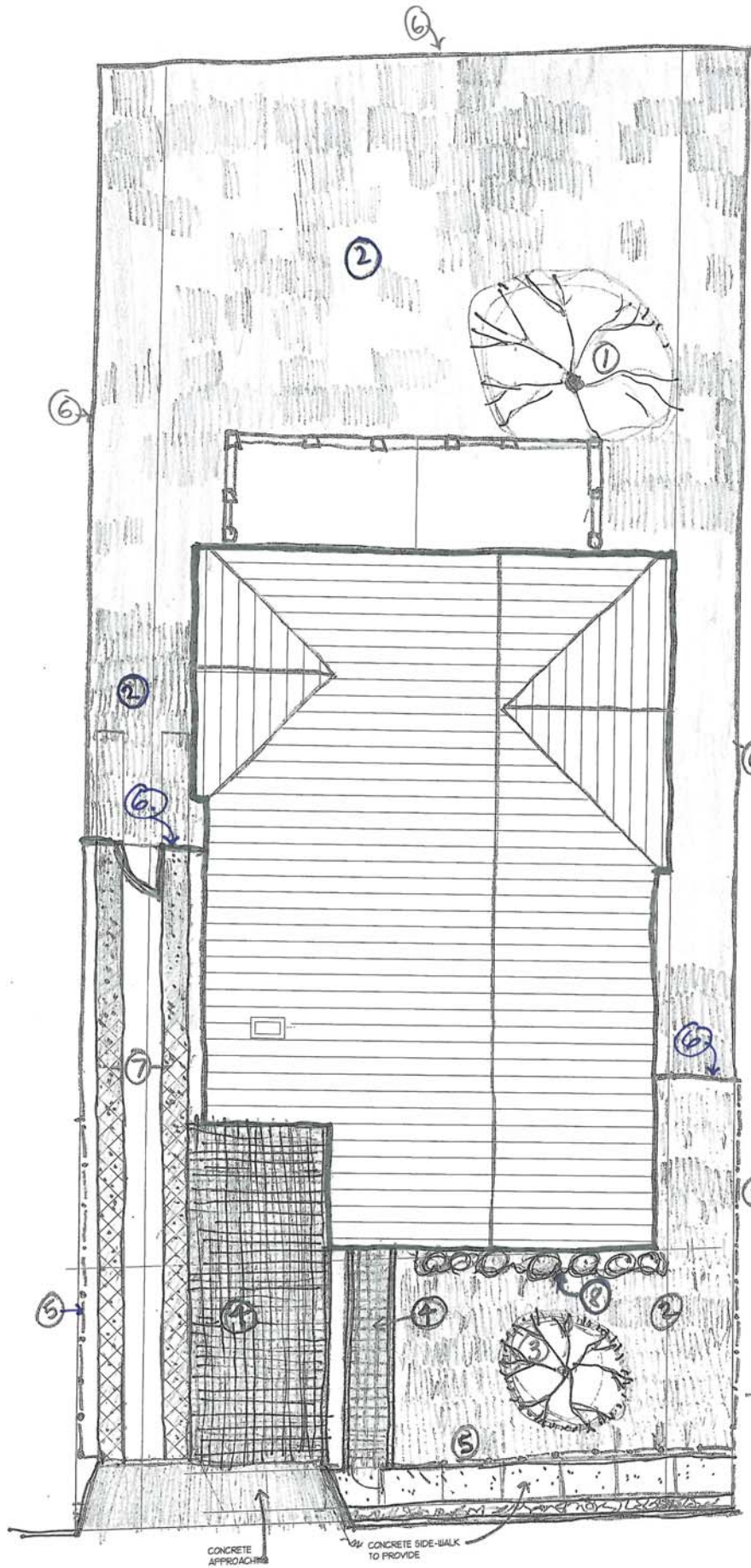


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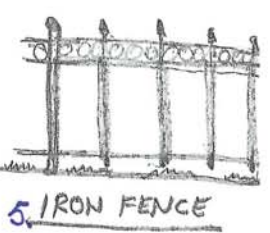
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- 1. EXISTING TREE
- 2. LAWN
- 3. NEW RED OAK
- 4. BRICK PAVERS
- 5. IRON FENCE
36" HIGH MAX
- 6. CEDAR FENCE
- 7. CONC RIBBON DRIVE
- 8. SHRUBBERY



CONCRETE APPROACH

CONCRETE SIDE-WALK TO PROVIDE





























