

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

October 21, 2015

Agenda Item No: 26

HDRC CASE NO: 2015-403
ADDRESS: 129 E CAROLINA ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 3009 BLK 7 LOT W 48 FT OF 16
ZONING: RM4 H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Lavaca Historic District
LANDMARK: House
APPLICANT: Heather Holdridge
OWNER: Heather Holdridge
TYPE OF WORK: Final approval of landscaping
REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to perform various landscaping tasks. Included in this proposal, the applicant has noted the installation of a concrete ribbon driveway, the removal of the pecan tree from the front yard, the replacement of front yard turf and its replacement with decomposed granite, concrete pavers and other landscaping materials.

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 to replace much of the historic lawn area in the front yard at 129 Carolina with various landscape materials that are not consistent with the historic examples set throughout Lavaca. While the applicant has proposed to install many native South Texas plants which are appropriate, the wholesale replacement of traditional front yard turf is not consistent with the Guidelines for Site Elements 3.A.ii. Staff recommends that the applicant maintain existing front yard turf and traditional lawn area while incorporating native plant materials.
- b. Currently, a large pecan tree exists in the front yard which the applicant has proposed to remove. Staff recommends the applicant provide a tree report from a licensed arborist noting the condition of the tree and whether the tree itself is unhealthy or if the tree presents an immediate threat to pedestrians or the historic structure due to disease or damage.
- c. To the east of the property, the applicant has proposed to install a concrete ribbon driveway to replace the existing gravel driveway. Between the ribbon strips the applicant has proposed to install decomposed granite. Staff find this

request appropriate, however, the applicant should ensure that the ribbon drive does not exceed ten (10) feet in width according to the Guidelines for Site Elements 5.B.

- d. In the rear yard, the applicant has proposed to incorporate a number of landscape materials, native plants and maintain more than half of the existing lawn area. Staff finds this request appropriate due to the screening of the rear yard from the public right of way as well as the retention of the existing rear yard turf.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the installation of the concrete ribbon strip driveway, the installation of decomposed granite within the ribbon strips and the proposed landscaping of the rear yard that is to be screened by the existing fence from the public right of way.

Staff does not recommend the proposed landscaping of the front yard in its current design nor the removal of the existing pecan tree. Staff recommends that the applicant maintain existing front yard turf and traditional lawn area while incorporating native plant materials as well as the applicant provide a tree report from a licensed arborist noting the condition of the tree and whether the tree itself is unhealthy or if the tree presents an immediate threat to pedestrians or the historic structure due to disease or damage.

CASE MANAGER:

Edward Hall





Flex Viewer

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The Holdridge Residence Plant Selection



1. Paloverde Tree (Thornless)



2. Knock Out Rose 'Red'



3. Mexican Bush Sage



4. Compact Cherry Laurel



5. Lindheimer Muhly Grass



6. Dwarf Indian Hawthorne "White"



7. Red Yucca



8. Gulf Muhly Grass

The Holdridge Residence Plant Selection



9. Artemesia



10. Bulbine



11. Green Santolina



12. Society Garlic



13. Mexican Feather Grass



14. Agapanthus



15. Confederate Jasmine



16. Cross Vine

The Holdridge Residence Hardscape Selection



Gray Decomposed Granite



Tres Rios River Rock



Play House (Pinterest Pin)



Concrete in Turfgrass (Pinterest Pin)



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