

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

November 18, 2015

Agenda Item No: 13

HDRC CASE NO: 2015-445
ADDRESS: 118 POTOMAC ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 585 BLK 3 LOT W 40 FT OF 5 OR 5A
ZONING: RM4 H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 2
DISTRICT: Dignowity Hill Historic District
APPLICANT: Nuala Benson
OWNER: East to West Properties, LLC
TYPE OF WORK: Fencing
REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install a five foot tall, front yard wrought iron fence on the property at 118 Potomac.

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 applicant has proposed to install a front yard wrought iron fence on the property at 118 Potomac in the Dignowity Hill Historic District. Along this block of Potomac, front yard fences are not common.
- b. According to the Guidelines for Site Elements 2.B.ii., new front yard fences should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them. While there are front yard fences present throughout the Dignowity Hill Historic District and the proposed wrought iron material is appropriate, front yard fences are not historically present on this block of Potomac.
- c. The applicant has noted that the proposed front yard fence is to be five (5) feet in height. The Guidelines for Site Elements 2.B.iii. notes that the height of front yard fences should not exceed four (4) feet in height. The applicant's proposal is not consistent with the Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff does not recommend approval based on findings a through c.

Staff recommends the applicant install a privacy fence in the side and rear yard that is not to exceed six (6) feet in height nor proceed into the front yard past the front façade of the historic primary historic structure.

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





Flex Viewer

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