

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

June 07, 2017

HDRC CASE NO: 2017-262
ADDRESS: 301 BARRERA
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 714 BLK 11 LOT S 80.9 FT OF 1
ZONING: RM-4 H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Lavaca Historic District
APPLICANT: Lewis Fisher/Fisher Heck Architects
OWNER: Christine Becksted
TYPE OF WORK: New fencing, new handrail, hardscape modifications, alterations to front steps

REQUEST:

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

1. Install new front yard fencing constructed of painted wooden posts and wire mesh.
2. Replace existing rear wooden vertical slat 6 foot privacy fence with new red cedar horizontal slat 6 foot privacy fence to match same footprint.
3. Install a new wooden handrail on three sides of the porch.
4. Modify existing wooden front porch steps and install a new set of wooden steps on the west side of the porch.
5. Install a new flagstone walkway from the sidewalk to the front porch.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 2, Exterior Maintenance and Alterations

7. Architectural Features: Porches, Balconies, and Porte-Cocheres

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

- i. *Existing porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres*—Preserve porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres. Do not add new porches, balconies, or porte-cocheres where not historically present.
- ii. *Balusters*—Preserve existing balusters. When replacement is necessary, replace in-kind when possible or with balusters that match the originals in terms of materials, spacing, profile, dimension, finish, and height of the railing.
- iii. *Floors*—Preserve original wood or concrete porch floors. Do not cover original porch floors of wood or concrete with carpet, tile, or other materials unless they were used historically.

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

- i. *Front porches*—Refrain from enclosing front porches. Approved screen panels should be simple in design as to not change the character of the structure or the historic fabric.
- ii. *Side and rear porches*—Refrain from enclosing side and rear porches, particularly when connected to the main porch or balcony. Original architectural details should not be obscured by any screening or enclosure materials. Alterations to side and rear porches should result in a space that functions, and is visually interpreted as, a porch.
- iii. *Replacement*—Replace in-kind porches, balconies, porte-cocheres, and related elements, such as ceilings, floors, and columns, when such features are deteriorated beyond repair. When in-kind replacement is not feasible, the design should be compatible in scale, massing, and detail while materials should match in color, texture, dimensions, and finish.
- iv. *Adding elements*—Design replacement elements, such as stairs, to be simple so as to not distract from the historic character of the building. Do not add new elements and details that create a false historic appearance.
- v. *Reconstruction*—Reconstruct porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres based on accurate evidence of the original, such as photographs. If no such evidence exists, the design should be based on the architectural style of the building and historic patterns.

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.

ii. *New construction*—Match the historic topography of adjacent lots prevalent along the block face for new construction. Do not excavate raised lots to accommodate additional building height or an additional story for new construction.

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.

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.

3. Landscape Design

B. ROCKS OR HARDSCAPE

i. *Impervious surfaces* —Do not introduce large pavers, asphalt, or other impervious surfaces where they were not historically located.

5. Sidewalks, Walkways, Driveways, and Curbing

A. SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

i. *Maintenance*—Repair minor cracking, settling, or jamming along sidewalks to prevent uneven surfaces. Retain and repair historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials—often brick or concrete—in place.

ii. *Replacement materials*—Replace those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair. Every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material.

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 primary structure located at 301 Barrera is a one-story duplex constructed in the Folk Victorian style. The home features several Folk Victorian elements, including a prominent side-gabled roof, front porch with column spindlework, and a symmetrical front facade. The home is a contributing structure in the Lavaca Historic District. The applicant is seeking approval to install new front yard fencing where fencing has not historically existed, replace an existing rear wooden fence, install a new handrail on the porch, modify existing front porch steps, and install a new flagstone walkway in the front yard.
- b. **NEW FENCING: LOCATION** – The property is located on a corner lot and does not currently contain a front or side yard fence. The applicant has proposed to install a fence along the south, east and west sides of the front yard. According to the Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements, front yard fences should not be installed in historic districts that have not historically had them. In the Lavaca Historic District, front yard fences are historically common. Staff finds the location of the fence appropriate for the property and the particular district.
- c. **NEW FENCING: HEIGHT** – The applicant has proposed a fence that measures four feet in height. According to guideline 2.B.iii, front yard fences should be limited to a maximum of four feet. Staff finds the proposal consistent with the Guidelines.
- d. **NEW FENCING: MATERIALITY** – The applicant has proposed that the fence be constructed of wooden posts and wire mesh. The wooden posts will be painted white to match the primary structure's exterior trim. Gates of the same material will be located at the walkway to the sidewalk and adjacent to the existing driveway. According to guideline 2.B.v, new fences should utilize materials that are similar in scale, texture, color, and form as those used in the district. Fences with posts and wire panels are characteristic of the Lavaca Historic District. The guidelines also state that the fence should respond to the design or materials of the main house. The fence proposal includes wooden posts painted white to match existing wood trim and columns on the house. Staff finds the proposal consistent with the Guidelines based on these district and property-specific considerations.
- e. **REAR FENCE REPLACEMENT** – The applicant has proposed to replace an existing six foot wooden vertical slat privacy fence with a new six foot western red cedar horizontal slat fence in the same location. The new fence will also include two swinging wooden gates at the Indianola St driveway approach and the interior driveway at the east side of the house. According guideline 2.A.i for Site Elements, replacement fences should match the existing historic material as closely as possible. The existing privacy fence is not original to the property, but is compatible with the home and the district. However, the proposed use of horizontal slats instead of the existing vertical slats is not characteristic of the district. Staff finds the proposed location and height consistent with the Guidelines but the material and configuration as submitted inconsistent.
- f. **NEW HANDRAIL** – The applicant has proposed to install a new handrail on the front porch. Based on the submitted narrative and elevations, the handrail will be made of wooden newel posts that frame the front entry, simple square balustrades, and a flat top rail. The handrail will utilize the existing wood columns as integral posts in its design. All handrail elements will be painted white to match the existing columns and the trim on the home. According to the Historic Design Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 7.B.iv, added porch elements should be simple as to not distract from the historic character of the building. New elements should not be designed in a way that conveys a false sense of historic appearance. Porch railings are not common historic elements for Folk Victorian homes of this configuration, which feature a porch that sits very low to the ground. The columns of this particular home, which are character defining elements, are very thin and delicate, and staff has not yet received detailed elevation drawings or plans that indicate the height of the proposed railing or the dimensions of the balustrades, newels, and rails, or information on how the proposed railing will interact with the existing columns in terms of structure. Staff does not find the proposal consistent with the guidelines.
- g. **FRONT PORCH STEPS** – The applicant has proposed to modify the existing front porch steps and install new steps on the east side of the porch for driveway access. Both sets of steps will be wooden and painted to match the color of the existing wooden porch decking. The new steps on the east will measure the length from the front façade to the existing porch column. The modified steps on the front will be on center with the main façade and measure the span of the two existing doorways. Currently, the existing front steps are on center with the left door and do not line up with the existing walkway or sidewalk approach. According to guideline 7.B.iv for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations, added porch elements, such as stairs, should be simple as to not distract from the historic character of the building. The proposed stairs on both the front and east sides of the porch are compatible with the style and materiality of the home. Staff finds the proposal consistent with the guidelines.
- h. **NEW WALKWAY: LOCATION** – The applicant has proposed to install a new walkway from the front sidewalk to the new front porch steps. The walkway will be located on center with the new stairs and the front façade as a whole. However, the proposed location will not align with the existing internal sidewalk approach nor the pedestrian curb cut in the public right-of-way to the street. According to guideline 5.A.iii for Site Elements, the historic alignment, configuration, and width of walkways should be maintained. The proposed walkway will be

located to the right of the existing public curb cut. Staff finds the proposal inconsistent with the guidelines and incompatible with the existing site conditions.

- i. **NEW WALKWAY: MATERIAL** – The existing front walkway includes a concrete approach from the sidewalk and loose gravel and stone up to the existing front steps. The applicant has proposed to utilize flagstone material for the new walkway. The applicant has not submitted a material specification, and the walkway as indicated on the submitted plans is a solid rectilinear element. According to guideline 5.A.ii for Site Elements, replacement materials should match the existing material as closely as possible. Flagstone is not a common material used for front yard walkways in the district. Staff finds the use of flagstone inconsistent with the guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

Item 1, Staff recommends approval of the new front yard fencing based on findings a through d with the stipulation that the applicant submits final drawings and specifications to staff for approval prior to receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness. The submittal must specify the final height, location relative to the property line, measurements and detailing of the cedar posts, and material specification of the wire mesh.

Item 2, Staff recommends approval of the rear fence replacement based on finding e with the stipulation that the applicant utilize vertical slats instead of horizontal slats. The applicant must submit final material specifications and elevation drawings prior to receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Item 3, Staff does not recommend approval of the porch railing installation based on finding f.

Item 4, Staff recommends approval of the modification of the existing front porch steps and the addition of new side porch steps based on finding g.

Item 5, Staff does not recommend approval of the new walkway as submitted based on findings h and i. As noted in the findings, the applicant should explore walkway configurations that accommodate and integrate the location of the existing curb cut from the street, such as a slightly curved approach, if they would like to return with an alternative design solution. The proposal should be of a width consistent with historic walkways in the district, and utilize a material common to the district, such as poured concrete.

CASE MANAGER:

Stephanie Phillips



Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

Printed: May 31, 2017

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HISTORIC & DESIGN
REVIEW COMMISSION
ADDRESS: [redacted]
REQUEST: [redacted]
HEARING DATE: [redacted]
TIME: 2:00 PM
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
OUR STAFF
ALL HIRC MEETINGS TAKE PLACE AT 100 S. ALAMO

Fisher Heck

ARCHITECTS

May 12, 2017

To: Historic and Design Review Commission
City of San Antonio

Dear Sirs:

Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Becksted would like to make the following improvements at their home at 301 Barrera Street:

1. Install a post and wire fence around the south, east and west sides of the front yard. The fence will be 4'-0" tall and will have gates at the new walkway to Barrera Street sidewalk and to the driveway. The wooden parts of the fence will be painted white. The fence will be planted with vines such as Confederate jasmine.
2. Install a new western red cedar fence in place of the existing wooden fence at the rear, west and east sides of the rear yard. Western red cedar gates will be installed at the Indianola street approach and at the driveway on the east side of the house in the same locations as the existing gates.
3. Install a new flagstone walkway from the front sidewalk to the front porch.
4. Install new painted wooden steps up to the front porch from the front sidewalk and the east side approach from the driveway. The steps will be painted to match the existing wooden porch deck.
5. Install a new handrail on three sides of the front porch as shown on the plan. The handrail will be painted white to match the trim of the house.

Thank you for your review. Please call me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Lewis S. Fisher, AIA, NCARB
President

Cc: David Hannan
File

BECKSTED PROPERTY PHOTOS



Front Elevation



West Elevation



East Elevation



Rear Elevation



Front Yard



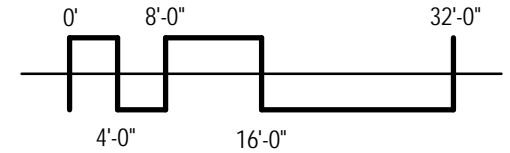
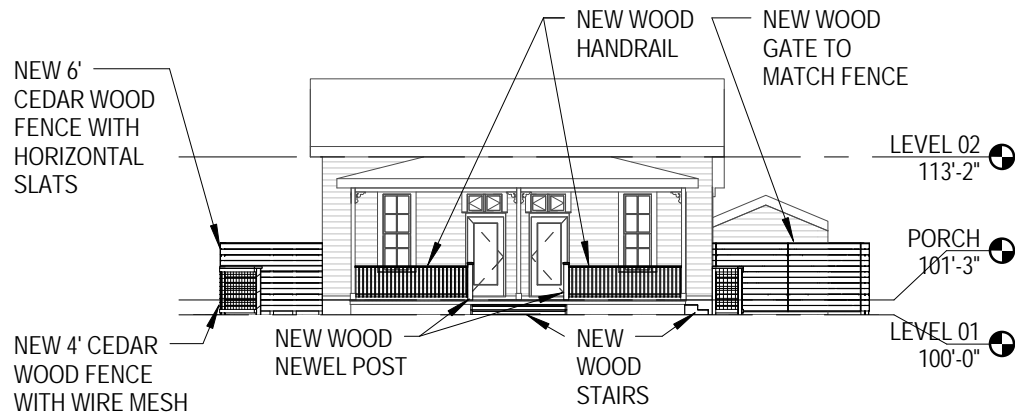
Front Porch Floor and Steps



Side Yard

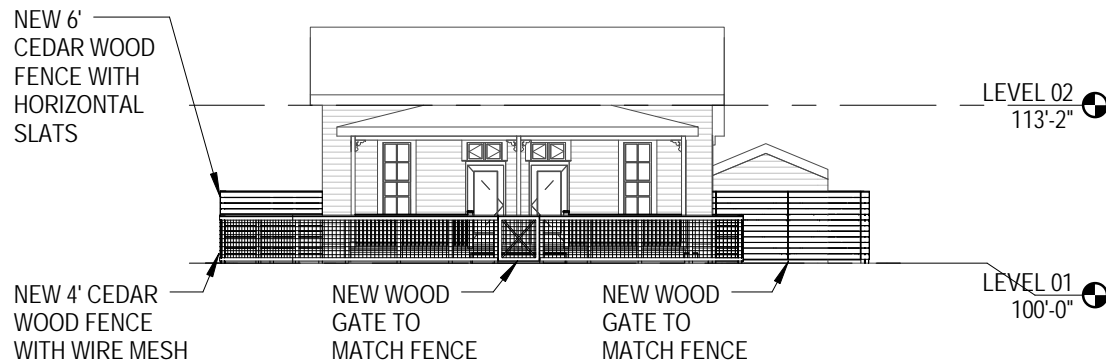


Driveway



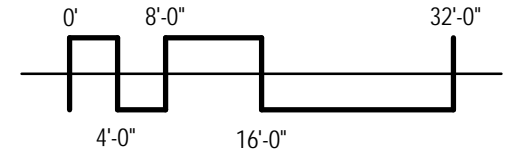
2 EXTERIOR ELEVATION

1/16" = 1'-0"



1 EXTERIOR ELEVATION

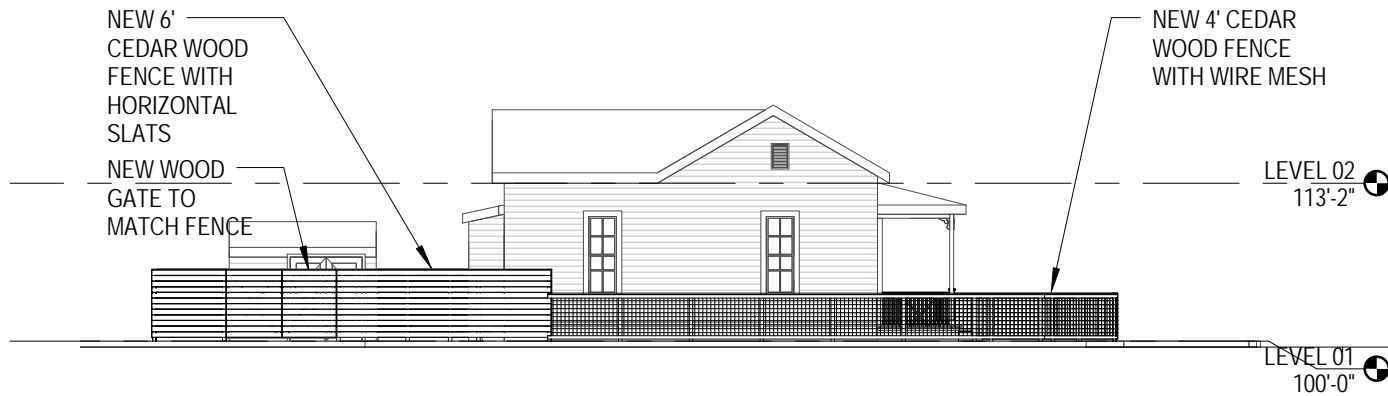
1/16" = 1'-0"



2

EXTERIOR ELEVATION

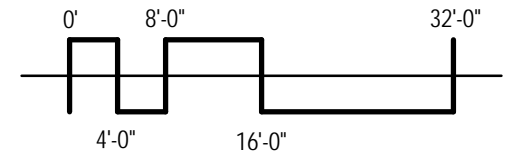
1/16" = 1'-0"



1

EXTERIOR ELEVATION

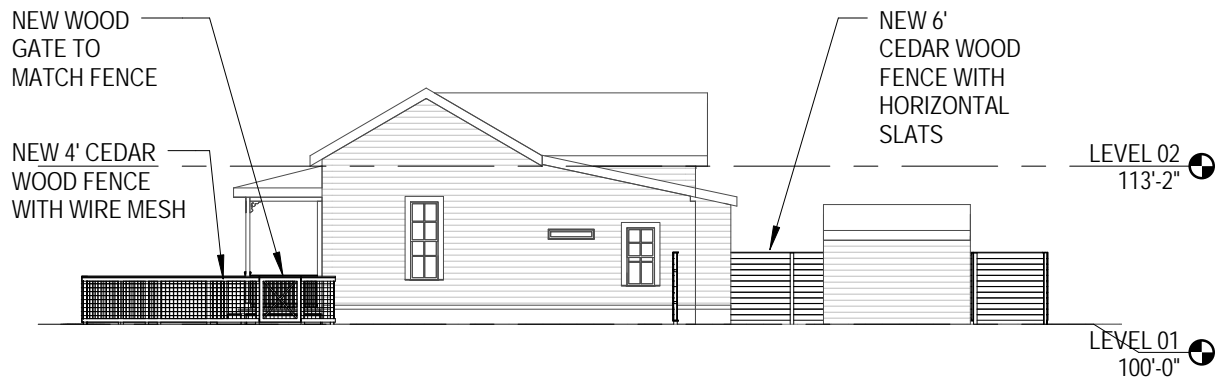
1/16" = 1'-0"



2

EXTERIOR ELEVATION

1/16" = 1'-0"



1

EXTERIOR ELEVATION

1/16" = 1'-0"

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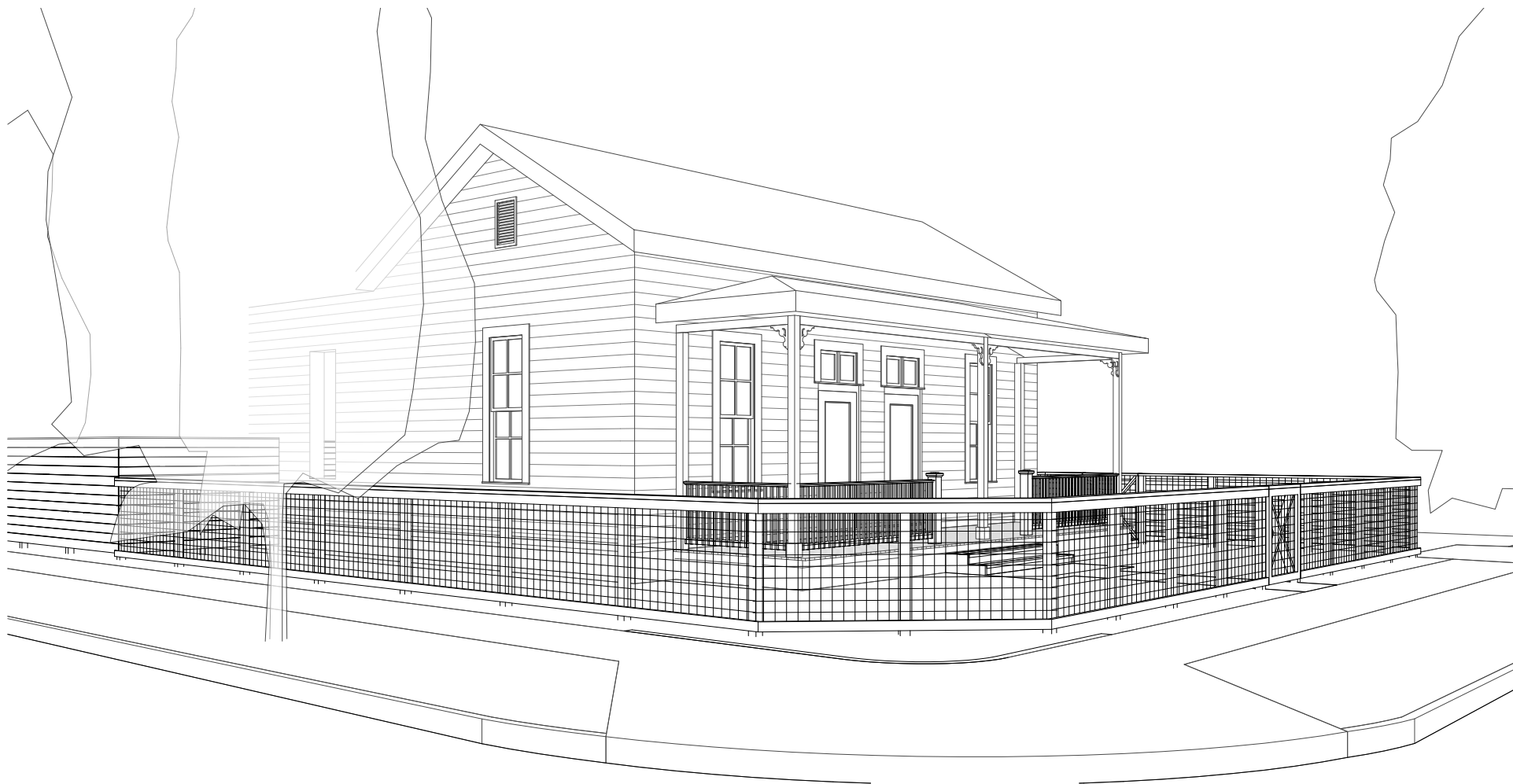
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BECKSTED RESIDENCE

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

EAST EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS | 05/12/2017

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EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE | 05/12/2017

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