

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

March 17, 2021

HDRC CASE NO: 2021-051
ADDRESS: 315 W HUISACHE AVE
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 3001 BLK 3 LOT E 47 OF 19
ZONING: R-4
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Monte Vista Historic District
APPLICANT: Larry Curtis/CURTIS LARRY G & JOSEPHINE F
OWNER: Larry Curtis/CURTIS LARRY G & JOSEPHINE F
TYPE OF WORK: Front yard fence installation, irrigation installation, walkway modifications
APPLICATION RECEIVED: January 25, 2021
60-DAY REVIEW: Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders
CASE MANAGER: Rachel Rettaliata

REQUEST:

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

1. Install a 4-foot-high wrought iron front yard fence and driveway gate
2. Replace the existing concrete front walkway with brick pavers

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.

3. Landscape Design

A. PLANTINGS

- i. *Historic Gardens*—Maintain front yard gardens when appropriate within a specific historic district.
- 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.
- iii. *Rock mulch and gravel* - Do not use rock mulch or gravel as a wholesale replacement for lawn area. If used, plantings should be incorporated into the design.

C. MULCH

Organic mulch – Organic mulch should not be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Organic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as beneath a tree canopy.

- i. *Inorganic mulch* – Inorganic mulch should not be used in highly-visible areas and should never be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Inorganic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as along a foundation wall where moisture retention is discouraged.

D. TREES

- i. *Preservation*—Preserve and protect from damage existing mature trees and heritage trees. See UDC Section 35-523 (Tree Preservation) for specific requirements.
- 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.
- iii. *Maintenance* – Proper pruning encourages healthy growth and can extend the lifespan of trees. Avoid unnecessary or harmful pruning. A certified, licensed arborist is recommended for the pruning of mature trees and heritage trees.

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.
- iv. *Stamped concrete*—Preserve stamped street names, business insignias, or other historic elements of sidewalks and walkways when replacement is necessary.
- v. *ADA compliance*—Limit removal of historic sidewalk materials to the immediate intersection when ramps are added to address ADA requirements.

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.

ii. *Curb cuts and ramps*—Maintain the width and configuration of original curb cuts when replacing historic driveways. Avoid introducing new curb cuts where not historically found.

C. CURBING

i. *Historic curbing*—Retain historic curbing wherever possible. Historic curbing in San Antonio is typically constructed of concrete with a curved or angular profile.

ii. *Replacement curbing*—Replace curbing in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair. Where in-kind replacement is not be feasible, use a comparable substitute that duplicates the color, texture, durability, and profile of the original.

Retaining walls and curbing should not be added to the sidewalk design unless absolutely necessary.

FINDINGS:

- a. The primary structure located at 315 W Huisache is a 1-story, single-family structure constructed circa 1930 in the Tudor Revival style. The structure features a composition shingle roof with two high-pitch front gables with gable vent details, an arched entry opening, an asymmetrical wrap-around front porch, and divided lite windows. The property is contributing to the Monte Vista Historic District.
- b. DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE – The applicant brought the request to the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) on March 3, 2021. The HDRC referred the request to the Design Review Committee (DRC) to further explore the evidence of a previously existing fence. The applicant attended the DRC on March 9, 2021, with updated application materials and additional evidence of the previously existing fence. The DRC discussed the streetscape along W Huisache, the prevalence of wrought iron front yard fences in the Monte Vista Historic District, and precedents for brick walkways on properties adjacent to 315 W Huisache. Additionally, the applicant discussed the unique site conditions of the property that necessitate a front yard fence.
- c. FENCE DESIGN AND HEIGHT – The applicant has proposed to install a 4-foot-high wrought iron front yard fence with a driveway gate and pedestrian gate. Guideline 2.B.i for Site Elements states that 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. According to Guideline 2.B.iii for Site Elements the height of new fences and walls within the front yard should be limited 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. While the design and height of the proposed front yard fence is appropriate for the Monte Vista Historic District, the streetscape along W Huisache features predominantly open yards or yards landscaped with box hedges or short retaining walls. The applicant has provided evidence of existing wrought iron fences at nearby properties; however, these two existing fences are installed on properties in proximity to a non-residential property. Staff finds the proposal inconsistent with the Guidelines.
- d. FENCE LOCATION – The applicant has proposed to install the 4-foot-high wrought iron fence around the perimeter of the front yard, 4 feet from the sidewalk. The proposed front yard fence will turn in at the driveway and terminate in a driveway gate at the front façade wall plane. Guideline 2.B.ii for Site Elements states that fence or wall installation should be avoided 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. The applicant has provided evidence that a front yard fence previously existed on the property, due to the presence of fence footings. The previously existing fence was most likely installed prior to 2007 and was most likely a nonconforming chain link fence. Staff does not find that a front yard fence is appropriate for this block of W Huisache. If a front yard fence is installed on the property, staff finds the location and placement of the driveway gate appropriate due to the unique site conditions of the property.
- e. FRONT WALKWAY REPLACEMENT – The applicant has proposed to replace the existing concrete front walkway with patterned brick pavers. Guideline 5.A.i for Site Elements states that historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials—often brick or concrete—should be retained and repaired in place. According to Guideline 5.A.ii for Site Element, when replacing those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair, every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material. Staff finds the proposal inconsistent with the Guidelines.

- f. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL – The applicant has proposed to install an irrigation system and perform landscaping modifications. The proposed landscaping plan will retain at least 50 percent of the existing green space. This scope of work is eligible for administrative approval and does not require review by the HDRC.

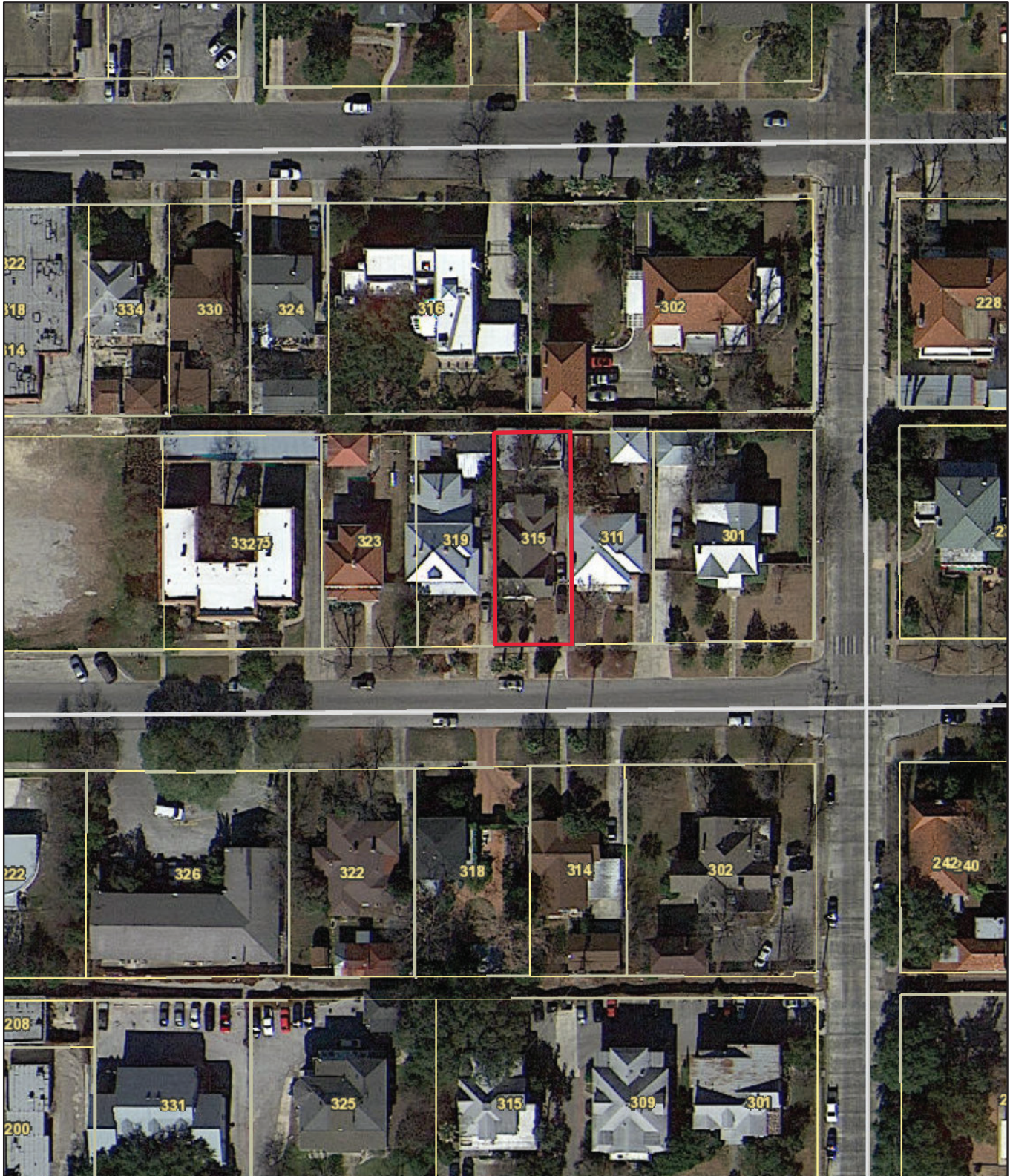
RECOMMENDATION:

Item 1, staff does not recommend approval of the front yard fence installation based on findings a through d. If the HDRC is compelled to approve the front yard fence installation, staff recommends the following stipulations:

- i. That the proposed driveway gate is located behind the front façade wall plane. The applicant is required to submit an updated site plan showing the location of the driveway gate behind the front façade wall plane to staff for review and approval.
- ii. That the final construction height of the approved gate and fencing may not exceed the maximum height of 4 feet as approved by the HDRC at any portion of the fence. Additionally, the gate and fencing must be permitted and meet the development standards outlined in UDC Section 35-514.

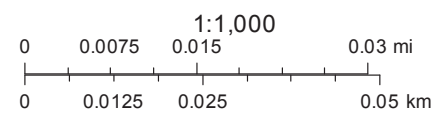
Item 2, staff does not recommend approval of the brick walkway installation based on finding e. Staff recommends that the applicant repairs and replaces the existing concrete walkway with in-kind material and matches the existing footprint and design.

City of San Antonio One Stop

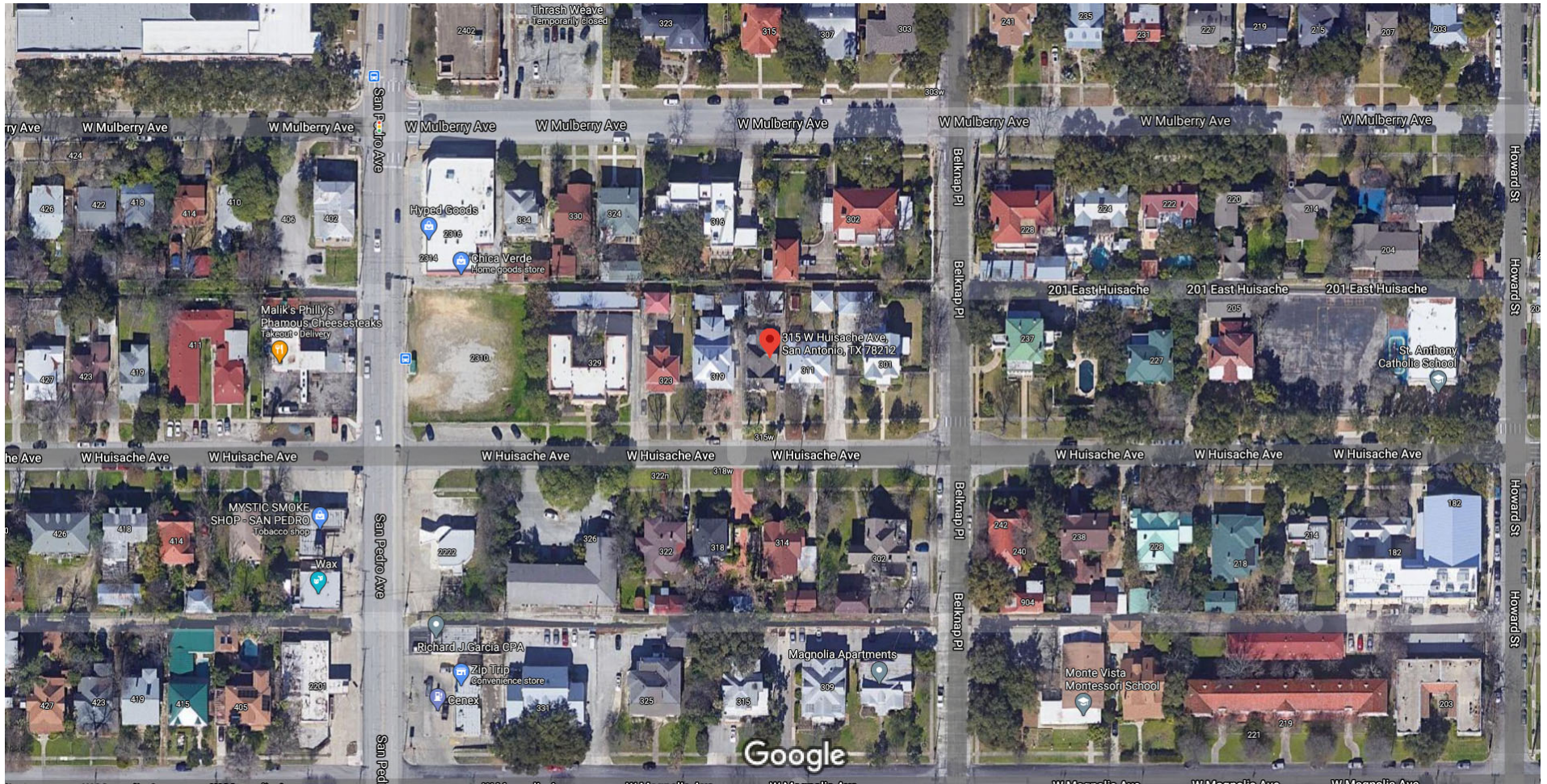


February 12, 2021

— User drawn lines

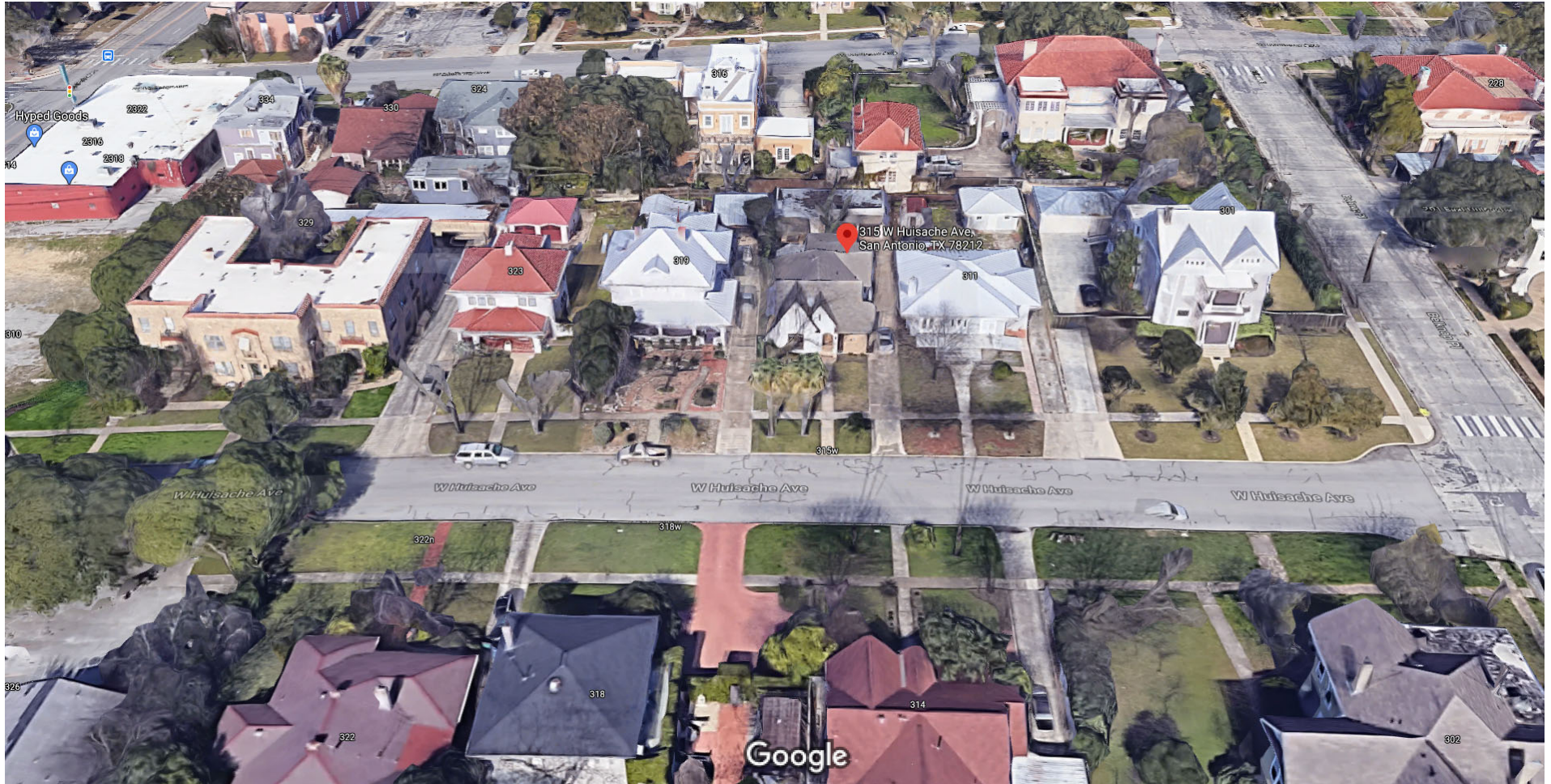


Google Maps 315 W Huisache Ave



Imagery ©2021 CAPCOG, CNES / Airbus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2021 Google 50 ft

Google Maps 315 W Huisache Ave



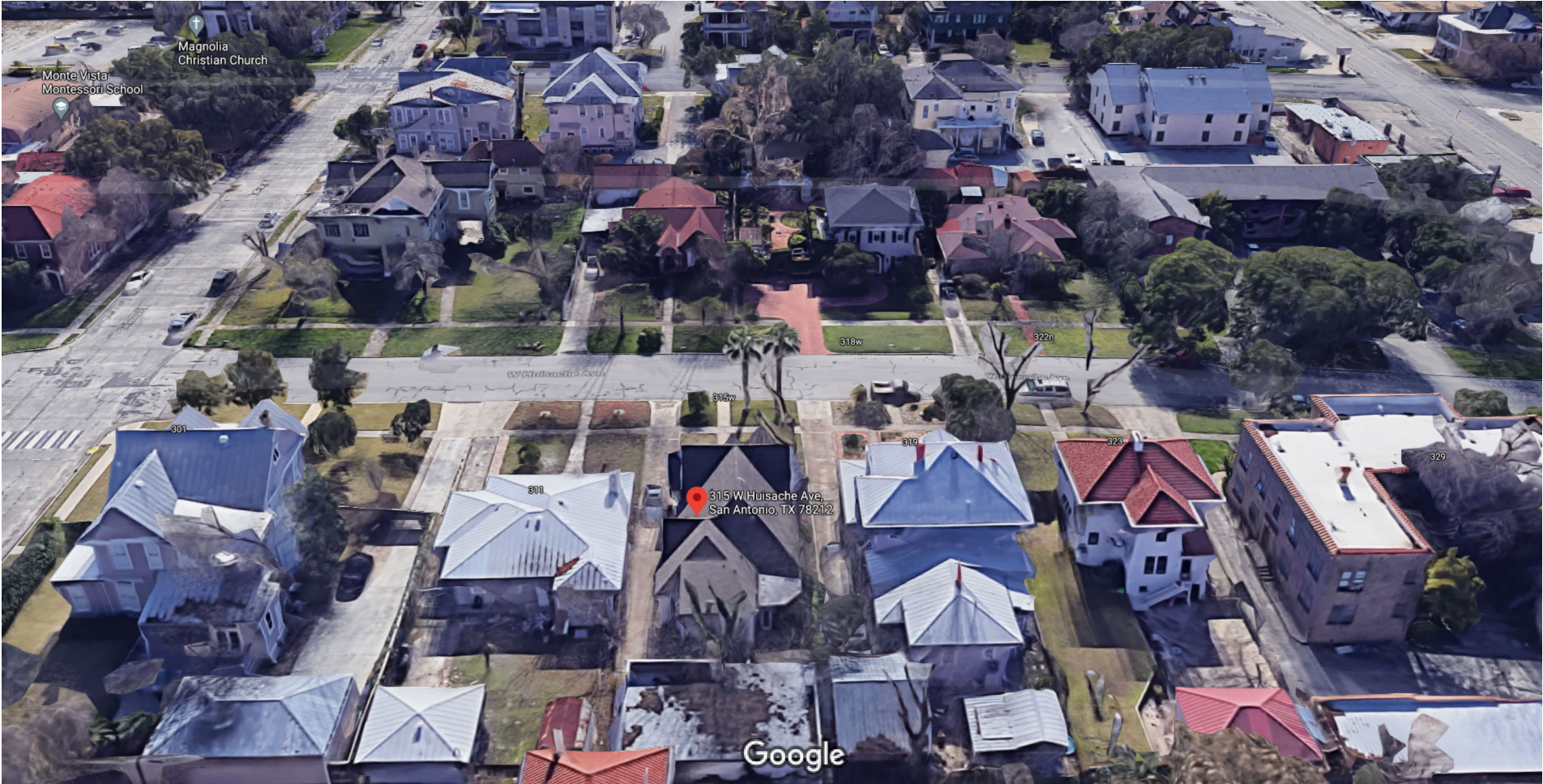
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Google Maps 315 W Huisache Ave



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Google Maps 315 W Huisache Ave



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UPDATED: March 10, 2021

REPLACEMENT FRONT YARD FENCE, LANDSCAPE AND WALKWAY CHANGES

- Address:
 - **315 West Huisache Avenue, San Antonio, Tx**



1. Front yard fence

Existing Fence

At one time there was a fence along the sides and the front of the front yard. The remains of this fence are evident by remaining footings at four locations. It is assumed that over time, other footings have been removed with updates of the walkway, sidewalk and driveway. The existing fence is assumed to be more than 70 years old, based on conversations with neighbors in the area and assumptions on fence type. It is possible that the fence was installed at the time the home was built in 1928. The picture below shows the location of the four remaining fence footings:



Location of existing fence footings



There are remains of an existing fence between our immediate neighbors at West 319 Huisache and West 323 Huisache. It is believed that this is the same fence type and material. The fence is a woven fence supported by zinc coated, round steel posts set in concrete. This type of fence has a life expectancy of 70 or more years.

West 315 Huisache sits on a lot that was subdivided from West 319 Huisache, there is a very limited setback between 315 and 319. The subdivision of the West 319 lot and construction of West 315 took place in the late 1920's.

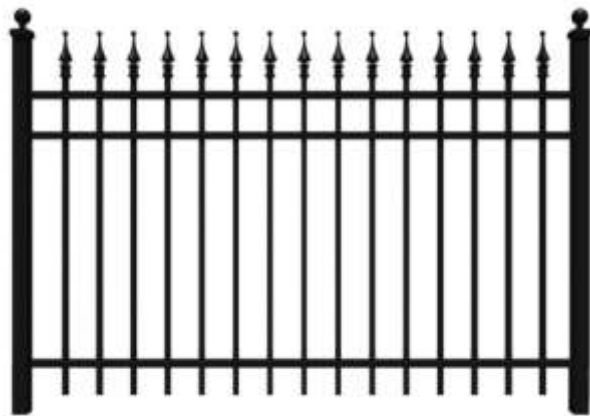
Below are photos of the existing fence:



Proposed Replacement Fence

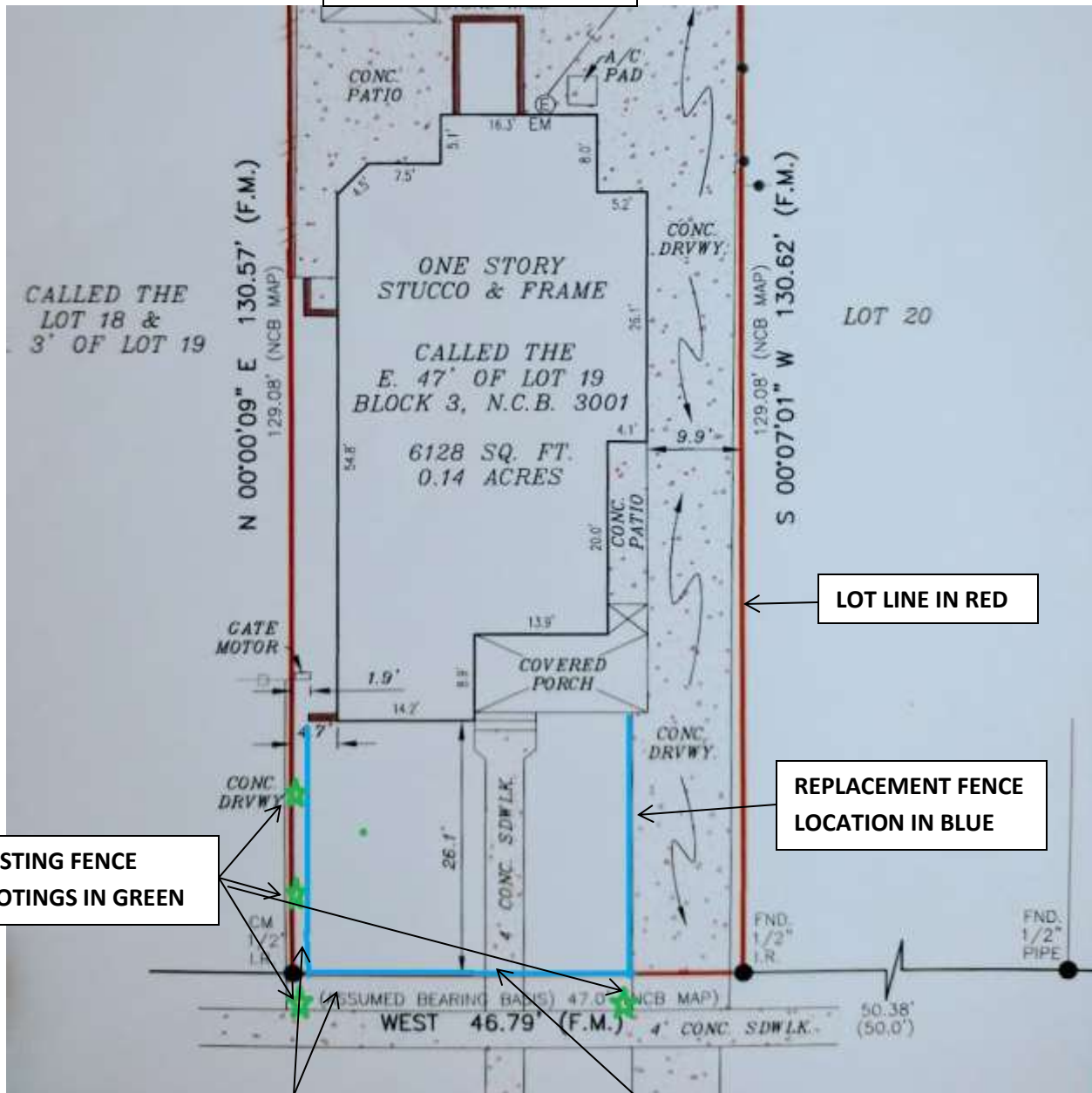
The proposed replacement fence will be an ornamental, wrought iron fence, four feet height and open in character. The fence will be built on both sides of the front lawn and extend along the front. The front gate will be four feet wide and four feet tall with an arched top. The front of the proposed fence will be setback from the front sidewalk approximately four feet and from the left side lot line by one foot. Drought tolerant plants will be planted on both sides of the fence.

The proposed fence components are manufactured by the Iron Fence Company of Ohio. The fence material is high grade aluminum, painted black with sand cast finials welded to the top of each picket. The same company makes the matching gate and posts.



Example of fence panels and gate

FENCE LOCATION PLOT



REPLACEMENT FENCE SETBACK 4 FEET FROM SIDEWALK AND 1 FOOT FROM SIDE LOT LINE

ARCHED 4 X 4 FOOT GATE

Discussion of the West Huisache 300 block

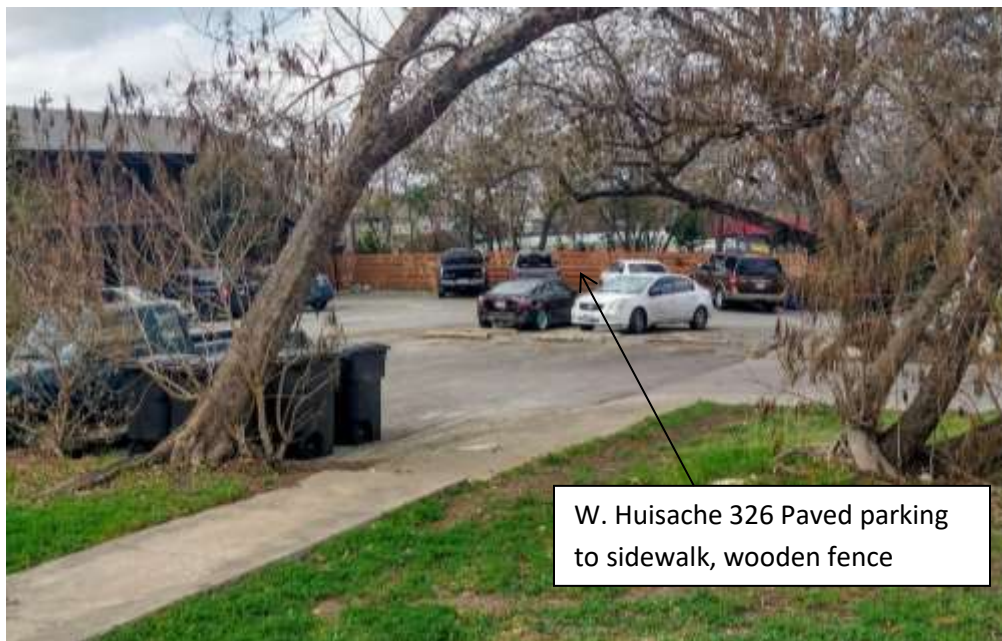


Five of the thirteen lots in the W. Huisache Ave. 300 block are made up of commercial and multifamily units (approximately 30 rental units). The resident lots on the block are zoned R-4 meaning small lots with narrow frontage. Another important consideration is that the alleys on both sides of this section of Huisache have been abandoned. The result is limited access via the alley and parking in the driveways and street. There is a wooden fence between 326/2222, woven wire fence between 323/319, low stone fence between 318/314 and wooden fence between 314/302.

Similar Fences in Neighborhood

It is understood that there are a limited number of front yard fences in the Monte Vista Historic District. This applies primarily to the areas of Monte Vista with larger lots, zoned R-5 with active alley access. This allows for wider lots with side yards. The West Huisache Ave 300 block has more in common with the Monte Vista area bounded by San Pedro Ave., Ashby Pl. and McCullough Ave. In this area there are a number of apartment buildings, commercial buildings, schools and churches with various types of fences. Residential units in this area often have wrought iron or picket fences. A large area around St. Anthony Catholic School on W. Huisache, Howard St. and Mulberry Ave is surrounded with wrought iron fencing. Montessori School on Belknap Pl. and W. Magnolia Ave. has iron fencing surrounding the front and sides. Keystone school and San Antonio Academy cover large areas surrounded by wrought iron fencing. Many of these areas contain historic buildings that were former residences.

In the West 300 block of Huisache:





Fence between 323/319 W. Huisache



Fence between 302/314 W. Huisache



Stone fence between 314/318 W.
Huisache



214 West Huisache Ave.



Mid-200 block W. Huisache Ave.
(part of St. Anthony)



Corner of West Mulberry and
Howard St. (part of St. Anthony)



306 W. Mistletoe Ave.



125 W. Mistletoe Ave.



239 West Mistletoe Ave.



235 West Mistletoe Ave.



Montessori School
Belknap Pl.

2. Changes to Walkway and Landscaping

The existing front yard is in need of new landscaping. The front walkway from the porch to the sidewalk has sunk and allows water to pool near the porch and along the walkway.



Existing



Proposed

Proposed walkway change consists of concrete replaced with brick, relocation of hedge and small Crape Myrtle along the walkway in six places (three per side). Front and sides of the front yard will have a four foot high wrought iron fence with gate, setback from sidewalk four feet. Both sides of the fence will be planted with drought tolerant plants.

Brick is very common in our neighborhood. Below are photos of surrounding properties with brick walkways or driveways.



318 West Huisache Ave.

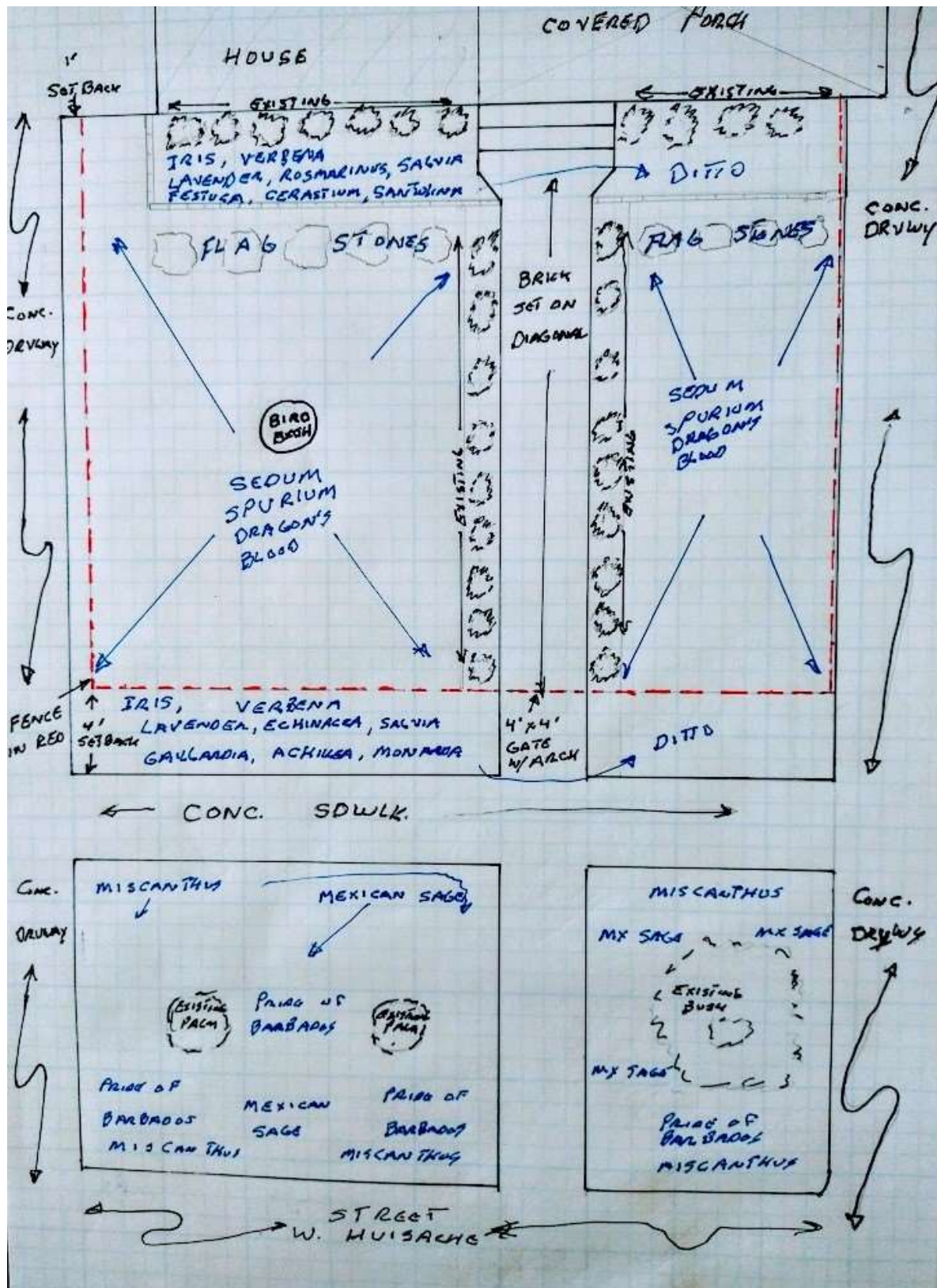


319 West Huisache Ave



322 West Huisache Ave.

3. Landscape Plan and Plant List



Plant List of Drought-Tolerant Plants

More than 50 percent of existing area will be planted.

1. Replacement for majority of lawn

- Sedum Spurium
- 6 Lagerstroemia (single trunk) 3 each side of pathway

2. Perennial beds

Ground cover

- Cerastium tomentosum
- Santolina chamaecyparissus
- Sedum
- Festuca glauca
- Salvia sylvestris

Medium height (2 -3 feet)

- Lavandula angustifolia
- Salvia rosmarinus
- Achillea millefolium
- Verbena bonariensis
- Gaillardia
- Agastache
- Echinacea
- Monarda

Tall – (3 to 4 feet)

- Salvia Leucantha
- Pennisetum setaceum
- Muhlenbergia capillaris



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**

Historic and Design Review Commission
Design Review Committee Report

DATE: 03/09/2021

HDRC Case #:

Address: 315 W Huisache

Meeting Location: WebEx

APPLICANT: Larry Curtis

DRC Members present: Jeffrey Fetzer

Staff Present: Rachel Rettaliata

Others present: N/A

REQUEST: Installation of a front yard fence, front walkway modifications

COMMENTS/CONCERNS:

LC: I have updated the applications file and provided information on the location of the existing fence footings

JF: The new information provided is helpful. Can you tell if it was a chain link fence with round steel posts in the footings?

LC: I'm assuming that it was a chain link fence, my neighbor has been here 33 years and he doesn't remember the fence. I think the fence may be 53 years old, I assume chain link has a life-expectancy of 20 years. It could have been put in the year the home was built in 1928.

JF: There were different thoughts from different Commissioners on the fence request. There were comments that the fence may have been warranted because there was a previously existing fence and also comments that the previously existing chain link fence would have been nonconforming. I'm not sure how the Commission will respond to this request, I am personally undecided. Staff may find that a fence on this property may not be appropriate on this block. I want to let you know that I appreciate the added information.

LC: I understand that and I have included additional information, it is important to note that on the other side of block they have abandoned the alleys on the other side of Huisache, so there is no chance of a sideyard. On the 300 block, we also have a 30-foot setback in the front yard, which makes for a nice front yard but really there is no backyard. On the 100-block and 200-block, their alleys are paved and they have access to the back. I can appreciate that the majority of Monte Vista is R-4 units and multi-family units. Huisache on the 300-block has more in common with the smaller area, than the R-5 lots in the majority of Monte Vista. I think that has to be taken into consideration. The depth of the front yard is 23 feet and the lot line is 4 feet back from the sidewalk, there will still be a considerable open area because of the depth of that front area. The fence area will be equal to the open area.

JF: I see that a landscape plan and Rachel is reviewing that and that may be approved administratively. Are you still proposing the replacement of the walk with brick?

LC: My wife would like the walkway, I have pointed out that almost all the surrounding properties have brick walkways. Mine is concrete and probably not original, it is in fine shape except that it is sloping.

JF: I did look at google earth and I see the properties nearby have brick, looking at your home – the detailing is simple and elegant, and I think adding a brick walkway to the front of it would detract from the design and character of your home. The other homes are large and are more ornate, those may be more fitting for those types of homes. For the style of your home and due to the elegant detailing, I think that a brick walk would detract from it.

OVERALL COMMENTS: