



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**19-5210

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**Agenda Item Number:** 2.

**Agenda Date:** 7/1/2019

**In Control:** Board of Adjustment

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**Case Number:** BOA-19-10300062  
**Applicant:** Grant Garbo  
**Owner:** Grant Garbo  
**Council District:** 1  
**Location:** 527 East Huisache Avenue  
**Legal:** Lot 26, Block 6, NCB 3090  
**Description:**  
**Zoning:** “MF-33 H AHOD” Multi-Family Monte Vista Historic  
Airport Hazard Overlay District  
**Case Manager:** Debora Gonzalez, Senior Planner

### **Request**

An appeal of the Historic Preservation Officer’s decision.

### **Applicable Code References**

*Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 2, Exterior Maintenance and Alterations*

#### 6. Architectural Features: Doors, Windows, and Screens

##### A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

i. Openings-Preserve existing window and door openings. Avoid enlarging or diminishing to fit stock sizes or air conditioning units. Avoid filling in historic door or window openings. Avoid creating new primary entrances or window openings on the primary façade or where visible from the public right-of-way.

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

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.

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.

### *Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 3, Guidelines for Additions*

#### 1. Massing and Form of Residential Additions

##### A. GENERAL

- i. *Minimize visual impact*-Site residential additions at the side or rear of the building whenever possible to minimize views of the addition from the public right-of-way. An addition to the front of a building would be inappropriate.
- ii. *Historic context*-Design new residential additions to be in keeping with the existing, historic context of the block. For example, a large, two-story addition on a block comprised of single-story homes would not be appropriate.
- iii. *Similar roof form*-Utilize a similar roof pitch, form, overhang, and orientation as the historic structure for additions.
- iv. *Transitions between old and new*-Utilize a setback or recessed area and a small change in detailing at the seam of the historic structure and new addition to provide a clear visual distinction between old and new building forms.

##### B. SCALE, MASSING, AND FORM

- i. *Subordinate to principal facade*-Design residential additions, including porches and balconies, to be subordinate to the principal façade of the original structure in terms of their scale and mass.
- ii. *Rooftop additions*-Limit rooftop additions to rear facades to preserve the historic scale and form of the building from the street level and minimize visibility from the public right-of-way. Full-floor second story additions that obscure the form of the original structure are not appropriate.
- iii. *Dormers*-Ensure dormers are compatible in size, scale, proportion, placement, and detail with the style of the house. Locate dormers only on non-primary facades (those not facing the public right-of-way) if not historically found within the district.
- iv. *Footprint*-The building footprint should respond to the size of the lot. An appropriate yard to building ratio should be maintained for consistency within historic districts. Residential additions should not be so large as to double the existing building footprint, regardless of lot size.
- v. *Height*-Generally, the height of new additions should be consistent with the height of the existing structure. The maximum height of new additions should be determined by examining the line-of-sight or visibility from the street. Addition height should never be so contrasting as to overwhelm or distract from the existing structure.

#### 3. Materials and Textures

##### A. COMPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

- i. *Complementary materials*-Use materials that match in type, color, and texture and include an offset or reveal to distinguish the addition from the historic structure whenever possible. Any new materials introduced to the site as a result of an addition must be compatible with the architectural style and materials of the original structure.
- ii. *Metal roofs*-Construct new metal roofs in a similar fashion as historic metal roofs. Refer to the Guidelines for Alterations and Maintenance section for additional specifications regarding metal roofs.
- iii. *Other roofing materials*-Match original roofs in terms of form and materials. For example, when adding on to a building with a clay tile roof, the addition should have a roof that is clay tile, synthetic clay tile, or a material that appears similar in color and dimension to the existing clay tile.

##### B. INAPPROPRIATE MATERIALS

- i. *Imitation or synthetic materials*-Do not use imitation or synthetic materials, such as vinyl siding, brick or

simulated stone veneer, plastic, or other materials not compatible with the architectural style and materials of the original structure.

## C. REUSE OF HISTORIC MATERIALS

i. *Salvage*-Salvage and reuse historic materials, where possible, that will be covered or removed as a result of an addition.

## 4. Architectural Details

### A. GENERAL

i. *Historic context*-Design additions to reflect their time while respecting the historic context. Consider character defining features and details of the original structure in the design of additions. These architectural details include roof form, porches, porticos, cornices, lintels, arches, quoins, chimneys, projecting bays, and the shapes of window and door openings.

ii. *Architectural details*-Incorporate architectural details that are in keeping with the architectural style of the original structure. Details should be simple in design and compliment the character of the original structure. Architectural details

that are more ornate or elaborate than those found on the original structure should not be used to avoid drawing undue attention to the addition.

iii. *Contemporary interpretations*-Consider integrating contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details for additions. Use of contemporary window moldings and door surroundings, for example, can provide visual interest while helping to convey the fact that the addition is new.

## 5. Mechanical Equipment and Roof Appurtenances

### A. LOCATION AND SITING

i. *Visibility*-Do not locate utility boxes, air conditioners, rooftop mechanical equipment, skylights, satellite dishes, cable lines, and other roof appurtenances on primary facades, front-facing roof slopes, in front yards, or in other locations that are clearly visible from the public right-of-way.

ii. *Service Areas*-Locate service areas towards the rear of the site to minimize visibility from the public right-of-way. Where service areas cannot be located at the rear of the property, compatible screens or buffers will be required.

### B. SCREENING

i. *Building-mounted equipment*-Paint devices mounted on secondary facades and other exposed hardware, frames, and piping to match the color scheme of the primary structure or screen them with landscaping.

ii. *Freestanding equipment*-Screen service areas, air conditioning units, and other mechanical equipment from public view using a fence, hedge, or other enclosure.

iii. *Roof-mounted equipment*-Screen and set back devices mounted on the roof to avoid view from public right-of-way.

## *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.

### 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.

### 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.

## 7. Off-Street Parking

### A. LOCATION

i. *Preferred location*-Place parking areas for non-residential and mixed-use structures at the rear of the site, behind primary structures to hide them from the public right-of-way. On corner lots, place parking areas behind the primary structure and set them back as far as possible from the side streets. Parking areas to the side of the primary structure are acceptable when location behind the structure is not feasible. See UDC Section 35-310 for district-specific standards.

ii. *Front*-Do not add off-street parking areas within the front yard setback as to not disrupt the continuity of the streetscape.

iii. *Access*-Design off-street parking areas to be accessed from alleys or secondary streets rather than from principal streets whenever possible.

### B. DESIGN

i. *Screening*-Screen off-street parking areas with a landscape buffer, wall, or ornamental fence two to four feet high-or a combination of these methods. Landscape buffers are preferred due to their ability to absorb carbon dioxide. See UDC Section 35-510 for buffer requirements.

ii. *Materials*-Use permeable parking surfaces when possible to reduce run-off and flooding. See UDC Section 35-526(j) for specific standards.

## 8. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

### A. HISTORIC FEATURES

i. *Avoid damage*-Minimize the damage to the historic character and materials of the building and sidewalk while complying with all aspects of accessibility requirements.

ii. *Doors and door openings*-Avoid modifying historic doors or door openings that do not conform to the building and/or accessibility codes, particularly on the front façade. Consider using a discretely located addition as a means of providing accessibility.

### B. ENTRANCES

i. *Grade changes*-Incorporate minor changes in grade to modify sidewalk or walkway elevation to provide an accessible entry when possible.

ii. *Residential entrances*-The preferred location of new ramps is at the side or rear of the building when convenient for the user.

iii. *Non-residential and mixed use entrances*-Provide an accessible entrance located as close to the primary entrance as possible when access to the front door is not feasible.

### C. DESIGN

i. *Materials*-Design ramps and lifts to compliment the historic character of the building and be visually unobtrusive as to minimize the visual impact, especially when visible from the public right-of-way.

ii. *Screening*-Screen ramps, lifts, or other elements related to ADA compliance using appropriate landscape materials. Refer to Guidelines for Site Elements for additional guidance.

iii. *Curb cuts*-Install new ADA curb cuts on historic sidewalks to be consistent with the existing sidewalk color and texture while minimizing damage to the historical sidewalk.

## **Background and Interpretation**

The structure located at 527 E Huisache Ave was constructed circa 1950 and is located within the Monte Vista

Historic District. The structure originally functioned as a duplex and features simplified Craftsman and Midcentury Modern design influences.

A proposal was considered by the Historic and Design Review Commission for the following request items:

1. Construct a rear addition to measure approximately 1,496 square feet.
2. Construct a new front porch with an ADA accessible ramp to measure approximately 459 square feet in footprint.
3. Relocate existing rear windows to the proposed rear addition.
4. Install new fiber cement siding on the existing structure where required.
5. Install a walkway and landscaping buffer in the front yard.
6. Install a new sidewalk to match the existing sidewalk configuration and materiality in the district.
7. Install new hardscaping in the rear of the lot to accommodate four parking spaces, an accessible parking space and drop off area, and accessible pedestrian route. The hardscaping will be a pervious brick pavement system.
8. Install a rear curb cut measuring approximately 46 feet total along the rear alley.

The project received conceptual approval from the Historic and Design Review Commission on February 21, 2018, which carried four stipulations. Conceptual approval is the review of general design ideas and principles (such as scale and setback). Specific design details reviewed at this stage are not binding and may only be approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness for final approval.

While the applicant met two of the four stipulations with their updated design for final approval, additional outstanding stipulations were not fully met, particularly regarding the proposed on-site parking pattern and the relationship of hardscaping to open green space.

At the April 17, 2019, Historic and Design Review Commission hearing, the request for final approval was denied. The Historic Preservation Officer issued a Commission Action Letter consistent with this recommendation.

### **Staff Recommendation to the Board of Adjustment**

Staff recommends that the Board of Adjustment uphold the Commission Action Letter dated April 17, 2019, by the Historic Preservation Officer to deny the request items.