



# **STAFF REPORT**

## **Historic Preservation Commission**

**February 22, 2021**

**HPCA-20-00140**

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**Agenda Item:** VI.D.3.

**Case Number:** HPCA-20-00140

**Property Address:** 915 NW 18th Street

**District:** Mesta Park Historic District

**Applicant:** Gumerson Blake Design Build  
Jeff Blake  
1020 NW 81st Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73114

**Owner:** Faizah Bhatti  
915 NW 18th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

### **A. CASE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. Demolish deck, fencing, retaining wall, various paving in the back yard (elective);
2. Demolish back, enclosed, porch (elective);
3. Construct addition (elective);
4. Relocate window (elective);
5. Construct deck (elective);
6. Construct fence (elective);
8. Construct retaining wall (elective);
9. Pour additional paving (elective);
10. Construct plant bed (elective);
11. Construct steps and gravel walkway (elective).

### **B. BACKGROUND**

#### **1. Project Description**

The proposal is to remove the enclosed back porch and all fencing, decking, and various paving. A two-story addition is proposed along with new landscape features including a deck, retaining wall, planting bed, fencing, and limited paving.

#### **2. Location**

Project site is located on the north side of 18<sup>th</sup> Street, mid-block between Francis and Olie Avenues.

### 3. Site History

***Date of Construction:*** 1910

***Zoned Historic Preservation/Historical Landmark:*** MP 1994

***National Register Listing:*** MP 1983

***Additional Information:***

The 1922 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps illustrates a two-story frame dwelling with a one-story front porch extending the entire length of the front (south) façade. A one-story porch at the northwest corner spans ½ the width of the rear (north) of the dwelling. A two-story frame “autohouse” is indicated in the northeast corner at the property lines with the front face back over ¾ of the property depth from the front property line. All structures have shingle roofs, typically wood shingles. The 1955 edition indicates the roofs to be composition materials.

### 4. Existing Conditions

The back porch appears to have been enclosed. County records indicate construction of a large deck in 2005. Fencing that exceeds the current Guidelines’ height limitations is in place.

### 5. Previous Actions

No Certificates of Appropriateness have been issued for this property.

## C. ITEMS IN COMPLIANCE

*Unless noted below in Section D., Issues and Considerations, all other case items of this proposal comply with the Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts, and with all relevant sections of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020.\**

### 1. Item 1, Demolish deck, fencing, retaining wall, various paving in the back yard (elective).

- a. Description: The applicant proposes removal of extensive decking in the back yard and various landscape components including paving, a retaining wall, and fencing. The removal of these components that are generally not consistent with the historic character of the district appears appropriate. These components do not appear to be historic. The Standards and Guidelines support removal of non-historic features.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

#### 2.5 Landscape & Landscape Elements

- 2.5.1: Maintain existing historic landscape and landscape features to preserve the historic district setting.
- 2.5.2: Historic elements, such as retaining walls, should be retained and preserved.
- 2.5.3: Landscape elements in back yards, not visible from any street or adjacent property and less than six feet in height are not subject to review

unless a building or other type of permit is required by the Municipal Code.

- 2.5.13 Landscape elements that are not visible from any public way and otherwise meet all relevant guidelines may be administratively approved.
- 2.5.10: Patios and other paved landscape elements in back yards should use permeable paving systems to minimize changes to drainage patterns and storm water run-off.
- 2.5.13 Landscape elements that are not visible from any public way and otherwise meet all relevant guidelines may be administratively approved.

### **3.1 Maintenance, Preservation and Rehabilitation of Exterior Building Materials**

- 3.1.1: Retain and preserve original and historic materials to sustain the historic character of a property and the embodied energy of the materials. Historic architectural features and materials that define the historic character of a building, property, or district shall be maintained in good repair.
- 3.1.5: If repairs or replacement affect more than one-half (50%) of an inappropriate component or material located on any individual building face or roof, then it is strongly encouraged that all of the inappropriate components or materials be replaced with appropriate materials. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required when all of the inappropriate materials are proposed for replacement. See “Administrative Review” below.

#### **c. Recommended Specific Findings:**

1. That the proposed removal of the deck, fencing, paving, and retaining wall do not appear to include removal of historic features;
2. That removal of the non-historic features has a positive effect on the historic character of the property.

## **2. Item 2, Demolish enclosed back porch (elective) and 3, Construct addition (elective).**

- a. Description: The applicant proposes demolition of the enclosed back porch and components of the rear wall of the dwelling in preparation for an addition to the rear of the structure. Though likely a remnant of the historic back porch, the feature has been altered and historic fabric and character altered in the transition.

An addition of approximately 600 square feet is proposed at the rear of the dwelling. Part of the proposal is one story at the location of the historic back porch. The eastern portion of the addition is a two-story feature. The 1<sup>st</sup> story has a low-pitched roof while the 2<sup>nd</sup> story is a gable end with a shallow pitch and the height well below that of the existing roof of the 2-story dwelling. The addition is inset on both east and west. Finished floor heights appear consistent with the primary, historic dwelling.

The siding is indicated as cementitious lap siding in 4- and 6-inch reveals. Trim is indicated as cementitious boards. A smooth finish is proposed for both. The applicant will install an architectural grade shingle. Windows are proposed in both divided lite and one over one. Documentation is included to illustrate compliance with the criteria

regarding divided lite. The foundation is indicated with “painted thin format brick” over concrete. Light fixtures are illustrated.

- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

#### 4.3 Building Additions

**Policy:** Additions should complement and not detract from the overall historic character of the historic district.

**Design Justification:** The way in which a historic building and an addition to it relate is important in protecting the integrity of the historic property and district. An addition directly affects the integrity of the building as a whole. Building additions should not detract from the historic character of the historic building or district.

**Sustainability Justification:** New construction should adhere to principles of sustainability in their materials, design and energy efficiency. If construction of additions results in the removal of original fabric, consideration should be given to maximizing the retention or re-use of existing historic features, details and materials.

- 4.3.1: Additions must be compatible in design, proportion, size, texture, color, and detail to adjacent buildings and streetscapes, and should be appropriate to the architectural style of the existing building. The incorporation of existing architectural features with new design elements can contribute added interest and compatibility.
- 4.3.2: New additions must be planned so that they are constructed to the back of the property or on a non-character-defining elevation preferably not visible from the public right-of-way. Character-defining features of buildings should not be radically changed, obscured, damaged or destroyed by an addition. The existing historic building fabric should not be damaged by the installation of a new addition.
- 4.3.3: It is not appropriate to alter the overall character of historic districts by substantially reducing the ratio of open space to built space on any site through new construction, additions or introduction of surface paving or other hardscape feature.
- 4.3.4: New additions shall not exceed 50% of the square footage of the footprint of the existing historic structure (enclosed space only), or 750 square feet, whichever is larger, and shall be no taller, no wider, and no deeper than the existing historic structure.
- 4.3.5: Additions to historic or non-historic buildings should relate to and complement the style of the main building, and may relate to the general style of the streetscape.
- 4.3.6: An addition to a historic building must be designed to be visibly distinguishable from the original historic building.

- 4.3.7: Additions to historic buildings should be designed so that connections between new construction and historic structures are clearly discernible. A clear definition of the transition between the new addition and the historic structure should be established and maintained.
- 4.3.8: An addition may be differentiated from the historic building by connecting the two with a modest connector, designed to be as transparent and unobtrusive as possible.
- 4.3.9: Historic details in the coping, eaves and parapet of the historic building may be continued at the point where the historic structure connects to the addition.
- 4.3.10: Additions should be clearly secondary to and distinct from the original building. This can be accomplished by providing a clear visual break between the historic building and the addition, by setting the façade of the addition back from that of the historic building, or by constructing a recessed area at the point at which the addition and the historic building join together.
- 4.3.11: Use of different but compatible materials or different (simplified) detailing is also appropriate to differentiate a new addition from the historic building.
- 4.3.12: The design of a new addition must consider and respect the massing, roof shape, bay spacing, cornice lines and materials of the building to which it is being added.
- 4.3.13: An addition may be horizontal (added to a side or back elevation) or vertical (a second story added to an existing one-story). However, vertical additions are not permitted at corner lots, nor in the Mesa Park Historic District. While vertical additions are not prohibited in other districts and internal lots, it is rare that the other requirements and recommendations of this section can be met.
- 4.3.14: Vertical additions to buildings must be located so that they are not visible to a person standing at ground level on the opposite side of an adjacent right-of-way. A vertical addition is not permitted at a corner lot because such an addition would be visible from the side street.
- 4.3.15: Facades of additions facing an alley or rear property line may be simplified and secondary in design to that of facades that are more visible from adjacent properties or the streetscape public right-of-way. The same materials should be used for alley-facing facades as that of the other facades unless this varies from the typical historic condition within the district.

#### **4.6 Exterior Materials at New Construction**

**Policy:** Materials used in the construction of new buildings, additions, garages and other accessory buildings should be compatible in appearance and design with common building materials in the district, or typical of structures of the proposed style, type, age and location.

**Design Justification:** The form, materials and details of exterior walls and embellishments, as well as their scale, texture and variety, contribute to the overall character of the historic district.

**Sustainability Justification:** Materials for new exterior wall construction should be as sustainable as possible. Appropriate siding materials may include stucco, wood, brick, or cementitious siding. Vinyl and metal siding materials are not sustainable and should not be used.

- 4.6.1: Alterations to existing, non-historic buildings (see “Alterations to Building Fabric and Components of Historic Buildings,” 3.1.10) that meet the criteria in this section may be administratively approved.

### **Wall Materials**

- 4.6.2: Materials for new construction should be consistent with those at other buildings within the property, block and historic district. Consideration should be given to the pattern of development of the specific property and lot.
- 4.6.3: Wood siding may be tongue and groove, shiplap, novelty or other compatible type. Board and batten may also be appropriate for use on accessory buildings; it is rarely used on primary buildings.
- 4.6.4: Brick is a common material in Oklahoma City historic districts and is appropriate for use on new construction.
- 4.6.5: Stone, particularly the earth-colored sandstone found in many of the historic districts, in an appropriate material that can be incorporated into new construction.
- 4.6.6: Cementitious siding (smooth finish) of an appropriate profile may be used at new construction of stand-alone primary buildings, garages and other accessory buildings. It may also be used for additions to historic structures.
- 4.6.7: Exterior insulation finish systems (also known as EIFS or Dryvit), metal and vinyl siding, concrete block, imitative brick or stone or gravel aggregate materials are not permitted as wall materials. However, ornamental, rock-faced, mold-formed or rusticated concrete block may be used for foundation walls if previously used for other buildings on the property or in the district.
- 4.6.8: Stone patterns, sizes and color of individual stones should be similar to those found at the property or in historic buildings in the historic district and typical of structures of the same style, type, age and location.
- 4.6.9: Masonry bonding patterns, sizes and color should be similar to those found at the property or used for historic buildings in the historic district and typical of structures of the same style, type, age and location.

### **Windows**

- 4.6.10: Windows in additions to existing buildings must match or complement the proportion, shape, pattern, size, details and profile of the

windows in the historic building. If the historic or existing windows are wood, the windows of the addition may be wood, vinyl-clad wood or aluminum-clad wood. If the historic windows or existing are steel, the windows of the addition should be steel or other compatible metal. All windows in new additions should be of a profile similar to the windows in the historic building.

- 4.6.11: Windows in new stand-alone construction must be similar to their counterparts within the property, block or historic district. These windows may be wood, vinyl clad wood, metal clad wood, or metal with a profile similar to the windows of other buildings on the property. For new infill construction the profile must be similar to the windows used on other properties in the block or historic district.
- 4.6.12: New windows may have a simpler window pane pattern than their historic counterparts; for example, if the historic windows are 6/1 (read “six over one”), then 1/1 windows of the same overall size may be used.
- 4.6.13: Windows constructed entirely of aluminum or vinyl are not permitted, and aluminum surfaces cannot have a clear, mill or anodized finish unless supported by historic documentation for a specific property or structure.
- 4.6.14: Clear glass must be used in all windows. Reflective, tinted, patterned or sandblasted glass in windows is generally not appropriate. Patterned, leaded or colored glass can be used in transoms and sidelights when established by the architectural style of the building or when supported by historical documentation for a specific property or structure.
- 4.6.15: Thermal pane (also known as insulated glass) windows are acceptable for additions or new construction. When muntins are proposed for a divided light appearance they should be “true divided lights” meaning that the thin wood framing (called ‘muntins’) completely frames and separates each piece of glass from the others.
- 4.6.16: Simulated muntins sandwiched between layers of glass in thermal windows, snap-on muntins, and surface-applied muntins may not be used except when internal muntins are used in conjunction with permanently fixed surface-applied muntins on the interior and the exterior of the glass.
- 4.6.17: Security bars may be used only on the interior side of windows and not sandwiched in between the layers of insulated glass.
- 4.6.18: Storm windows and window screens are permitted and should meet the recommendations and requirements of the applicable sections in the “Alterations to the Building Fabric and Components of Historic Buildings” chapter.

### **Doors**

- 4.6.19: Recommendations and requirements for garage type doors are described in the “Garage” section of this chapter.

- 4.6.20: Recommendations and requirements for primary entrance doors, screen doors and storm doors, and doors that are visible from the public right-of-way are the same as described for the “Alterations to the Building Fabric and Components of Historic Buildings” chapter.
- 4.6.21: Swinging (French) or sliding patio doors used for new construction in the back of a new infill primary building, or new garages, accessory buildings, or new additions in the back yard and used in conjunction with sidelights may use the recommendations and requirements associated with the previous subsection of this section, “Windows,” provided that the patio doors and sidelights will match.
- 4.6.22: Pedestrian doors that are not visible from the public right-of-way may be made of alternate materials including aluminum clad wood, composite wood, and fiberglass. Doors in Heritage Hills must be of solid wood.

#### **Roof and Roofing Materials**

- 4.6.23: Wood shingles, composition shingles, slate tiles, terra cotta or clay tiles are permitted for use on roofs. Recommendations and requirements for these materials are found in the “Alterations to the Building Fabric and Components of Historic Buildings” chapter.
- 4.6.24: Metal roofs are permitted only as supported by historical documentation of such material for the property.
- 4.6.25: Synthetic slate and clay tiles may be able to be used if the appearance matches authentic slate and clay tiles in all aspects. These materials may be considered on a case by case basis.
- 4.6.26: Composition roofs should be of higher quality and are often referred to as Architectural Grade or Dimensional Grade. These shingles are usually rated as 30-, 40-, or 50-year shingles and have a thicker profile.
- 4.6.27: Built-up roofs, single-ply membranes should not be used on sloped roofs.
- 4.6.28: Multi-colored asphalt shingles and synthetic wood shingles should not be used on sloped roofs.
- 4.6.29: Historic eaves, copings, cornices, dormers and roof trim should be retained and preserved.

#### **c. Recommended Specific Findings:**

1. That additions are allowed on the rear and removal of the altered back porch has no adverse effect on the character of the structure or the district;
2. That the proposed addition is compatible in design, proportion and size to the architectural style of the existing building;
3. That the addition is planned to the back and is not visible from the street right of way and is minimally visible from the alley right of way;



4. That the addition falls within recommended size restrictions and does not alter the overall character of the district by substantially reducing the ratio of built to open space;
5. The addition is differentiated from the historic dwelling by insets and height and relates to and complements the style of the main building as drawn;
6. That the use of different but compatible materials is appropriate.

**3.Item 4, Relocate window (elective).**

- a. Description: The applicant proposes the relocation of a window near the northeast corner of the historic second story. The window appears to be located within the rear 30% of the side elevation. No change to the window is proposed beyond relocation. Wood siding will be used to infill the remaining opening.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

**3.6 Windows, Shutters and Awnings**

- 3.6.6: New window openings may be allowed on the back facade or the back 30% of the side elevations. New windows must be compatible with historic or existing windows in proportion, shape, location, pattern, size, materials and details.
- c. Recommended Specific Findings:
    1. That the window proposed for relocation is currently in the rear 30% of the side elevation of the historic dwelling;
    2. That the window proposed for relocation will be located in the rear 30% of the side elevation of the historic dwelling;
    3. That the existing window and opening will remain unchanged beyond location;
    4. That should this not be accurate, additional commission review is required.

**D. ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS**

*This proposal may not comply with the Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts, and with all relevant sections of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020\* as referenced below:*

1. **Item 5, Construct deck, Item 6, Construct fence, Item 8, Construct retaining wall (elective), Item 9, Pour additional paving (elective); Item 10, Construct plant bed (elective ); Item 11, Construct steps and gravel walkway (elective),**
  - a. Description: The applicant proposes to replace and modify existing features including a deck, retaining wall, fencing, and various paving and landscape elements. These elements have not been shown to be historic and no CA appears to have been issued for these features previously.

The applicant proposes to construct a new deck, retaining wall, and fence in the back and side yard, with additional paving and landscaping features surrounding. The

proposed deck is described as Trex with stained vertical siding and lattice as the skirting. has been modified from the initial proposal to a reduced length of 24'4" and a maximum width of 29'9", narrowing to 16'9".

The portion of the deck abutting the house matches the finished floor height of the house at approximately 4 feet tall. The grade of the yard slopes down toward the rear of the property (north), with a proposed concrete retaining wall supporting the deck and bringing it to a maximum height of 5' above grade, topped by a 3' transparent railing. The deck extends out from the house for 14 feet, angles around an existing mature tree, and then drops to a height of 1'9" above the retaining wall, or 2'9" above grade.

The lower portion of the deck extends out from the house for approximately 10 more feet, then steps down to a proposed sidewalk and the backyard. At the lower portion of the deck, a solid fence is proposed at 5'6" on top of the deck, or a total height of approximately 8'3" above the driveway. The proposed fence then steps down as it extends past the deck to a height of 6 feet on top of the retaining wall, or approximately 7'2" above the driveway.

The proposed deck has stairs accessing the west side of the yard with a gravel walk and planting areas. Specific materials and dimensions for the planting area and gravel walk have not been fully detailed.

Beyond the deck in the backyard, the applicant proposes to install a new sidewalk west of the fence and retaining wall, extending to the garage. The sidewalk is bordered on the east by a "stone curb" indicated to match an existing stone curb. Materials, dimensions of the curb, and any additional changes to the topography of the site have not been provided.

A new planting area is proposed between the northeast corner of the house and the driveway but has not been detailed. Beyond the planting area new paving is proposed to fill in between the retaining wall and driveway. New fencing and a gate are proposed at the rear of the property.

- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

## 2.5 Landscape & Landscape Elements

**Policy:** The term "landscape" comprises the exterior environment of a historic property. Landscape elements can be natural or constructed features, including decks, patios, landforms, site furniture, pools, fountains, terraces, sculptures, planters, trellises, pergolas, outdoor lighting and other features, which generally should be located out of public view. Landscape features should be restrained on the fronts of buildings to allow viewing of the "public face" of the property and maintain historic streetscapes.

**Design Justification:** Just as the site, context and environment are critical to the character of a historic building, property and district, the landscape is also an important character-defining feature of a historic property. Original or historic landscape elements may be important character-defining features of a historic

property and should be preserved. Added landscape features are more appropriate in back or side yards.

- 2.5.2: Historic elements, such as retaining walls, should be retained and preserved.
- 2.5.14: New retaining walls may be approved to preserve a natural or existing historic slope in the front and side yards only if an earlier retaining wall on the property can be documented.
- 2.5.15: New retaining walls not to exceed two feet in height may be approved to preserve a natural or existing slope in back yards not visible from the public right of way.
- 2.5.16: The height of a new retaining wall may not exceed the height of the slope it retains.
- 2.5.17: A retaining wall in front or side yards visible from the public right of way shall be constructed of unpainted natural stone, brick or finished concrete that is compatible in texture, color and style to the main building or adjacent paving materials.
- 2.5.18: A retaining wall constructed in side or back yards not visible from the public right of way may be constructed of alternative materials; i.e., concrete block, landscape block, landscape timbers, etc.
- 2.5.28: New rear decks shall be compatible with the building to which they relate in proportion, size, scale and material.
- 2.5.29: New rear decks that exceed six (6) feet in height or are visible from the public right of way require a certificate of appropriateness.
- 2.5.30: New rear decks shall be constructed of wood or sustainable alternative materials that closely resemble wood and may have decorative or functional metal elements such as wrought iron where appropriate. Synthetic materials that do not closely replicate historic fabric, such as plastic and vinyl are prohibited.
- 2.5.31: Rear decks that permanently attach to the structure, have a roof, or are constructed of permanent building materials such as brick, stucco or stone shall be reviewed as building additions. CMU is prohibited unless matching documented original or historic building material on site.
- 2.5.32: New decks shall not be constructed in such a manner that abutment or attachment to an existing structure will allow for the pooling of moisture against or the infiltration of moisture into an existing structure.
- **Landscape Elements** means those elements that contribute to the landscape such as exterior furniture, decks, patios, outdoor lighting and other elements that may be located in conjunction with a landscape.

## 2.6 Views and Vistas

**Policy:** Maintaining views and vistas helps preserve a historic setting as a whole. Maintenance of trees and shrubs with seasonal trimming allows for moisture evaporation around a building and permits visibility of the district's historic setting from the street.

**Design Justification:** Many of the city's historic districts were designed with uniform setbacks creating continual views or vistas along the street. These historic patterns should be maintained and not interrupted with added features.

- 2.6.5: Landscape elements or hardscaping elements such as raised planting beds must not obscure the views and vistas from or to the primary historic structure of the property within a historic district.

## 2.8 Fences and Walls

**Policy:** Preserve original or historic fences and fence walls. New fences should be of renewable materials such as wood, woven wire or brick. Vinyl fences are not appropriate.

**Design Justification:** Fence walls and fences historically marked property boundaries and may have shielded private areas from public view. Historic materials such as wire, wood and brick are compatible materials; vinyl materials introduce an incompatible artificial appearance.

**Sustainability Justification:** Preserving existing fences and fence walls saves resources. New wood fences constructed of lumber from managed forests represents use of a renewable resource. Petroleum-based vinyl fencing is not a sustainable material.

- 2.8.1: Regular maintenance of historic fences and fence walls is recommended because of the overlapping effects of sustaining the existing materials in place and preserving historic or appropriate fences.
- 2.8.2: Regular maintenance ensures the preservation of historic and appropriate fence and fence wall elements, which in turn sustains the embodied energy of the materials and eliminates the need for replacement with new materials and labor.
- 2.8.3: Original or historic fences and fence walls are important character-defining features and should be preserved and maintained.
- 2.8.4: Fences and fence walls in back yards have more flexible requirements than those in side yards or those that are front yard facing because they are less visible from the public right-of-way.
- 2.8.5: Fences and fence walls are generally permitted in side, corner side, and back yards. Interior side and corner side yard fences and fence walls must be set back from the historic front building line by a distance not less than six feet. Depending on the materials and details of a fence and fence wall, additional requirements of this section may apply.

- 2.8.6: A fence or fence wall located on the street facing side yard of a corner property must be set back from the inner edge of a public sidewalk by a minimum distance of two feet, or six feet from the curb where there is no sidewalk.
- 2.8.7: If an adjacent corner property side yard has an existing fence or fence wall, then consideration shall be given to align a fence or fence wall to the same setback as that existing fence or fence wall of the adjacent corner property side yard.
- 2.8.8: Fences shall be located behind any open front porch of the main building AND the open front porch of the main building of any adjacent property.
- 2.8.9: Fences and fence walls shall be located at or behind the front 40% of the side yard of the main building unless the fence or fence wall is 75% transparent not including posts or columns spaced a minimum of eight feet apart. Depending on the design and architecture of the main building, additional requirements of this section may apply.
- 2.8.10: Opaque fences and fence walls , those that are less than 75% transparent not including posts or columns space a minimum of eight feet apart, shall not obscure view of significant architectural features of the primary building on the property, such as a bay window, porte-cochere, or other significant character defining building projection or feature.
- 2.8.11: Fences and fence walls are not permitted in front yards, unless supported by historical physical or photographic evidence to the contrary. If a fence or fence wall is appropriate for the front yard, then it shall match the historical configuration and approximate the historical appearance.
- 2.8.12: Fences and fence walls shall not exceed eight feet in height at the back property line or alley.
- 2.8.13: Fences and fence walls shall not exceed six feet in height on side or front facing locations.
- 2.8.14: Chain link or twisted wire fences shall not exceed four feet in height unless historical, physical or photographic evidence to the contrary documents them to have been taller in the proposed location.
- 2.8.15: Where residential properties are adjacent to commercial or other incompatible uses, alternative fence heights may be considered for appropriateness and with respect to other City ordinances related to fences and fence walls.
- 2.8.16: Acceptable materials for fences and fence walls are wood, brick, stone, cast iron, iron, chain link, twisted wire, painted aluminum that mimics the appearance of cast iron or iron fences, or a combination of these materials. Materials for fences and fence walls should be consistent with materials historically used at each individual property or within the historic district during the period of significance.

- 2.8.17: Wood fences may be left unfinished or painted or stained in colors appropriate to the style and period of the property or the district. The exterior flat fence or fence wall surface, if painted, should be compatible with the color of the main building.
  - 2.8.18: Decorative painting and murals shall not be applied to fence or fence wall surfaces visible from the public right-of-way.
  - 2.8.19: Tops of new fences or fence walls may be horizontal, stepped, scooped, arched or parallel with the grade, as appropriate to the style and period of the main building or the historic district.
  - 2.8.20: Chain link fences shall have a top and bottom rail and may be galvanized.
  - 2.8.21: The side of a fence or wall facing the street or alley shall be the “finished” side.
  - 2.8.22: The corners of corner properties should have partially “transparent” or open fences or fence walls to avoid complete visual enclosure along side streets.
- c. Considerations: Various landscaping features in back and side yards, including paving, landscape beds, decks, and retaining walls, can often be administratively approved if Guidelines are met. Proposed landscape beds, gravel paths, and stone curbs have not been defined to the extent that staff can determine if they meet the Guidelines and qualify for administrative approval.
- Retaining walls are allowed in back and side yards to retain an existing slope, but the Guidelines do not support significant changes in topography. Such changes can impact the historic character of a property and can also have an adverse physical effect on the site’s stability and drainage patterns. The proposed work has not fully described potential changes to the topography of the site through the installation of the proposed retaining wall and “curbs” in the backyard.
- The installation of a fence and deck on top of a retaining wall creates height that is greater than what the Guidelines support and also makes the features more permanently attached than is typical for a fence or deck. While these items replace similar existing features, those features do not appear to be historic or to have been constructed with a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Some material choices, including gravel and Treks, may not be appropriate and are not supported by the Guidelines in all locations.
- The height of the proposed deck has been modified from the initial proposal to be more compatible, stepping down from the finished floor height of the primary structure as it transitions to the backyard. The proposed fence remains higher, as measured from the driveway, than the Guidelines support. Dramatic changes in topography may warrant flexibility on the height of fencing in order to provide functionality and privacy in back yards; however, it is not clear that this change in topography is existing or necessary.

d. Recommended Specific Findings:

1. That the proposed deck appears to be compatible with the building or site to which it relates in proportion, size, and scale;
2. That the proposed deck is minimally visible from the public right of way;
3. That construction of the deck appears to be dependent upon approval of other proposed items;
4. That opaque fences on side and front facing locations shall not exceed 6 feet in height and shall be located at or behind the 40% mark in the side yard;
5. That placing a fence on top of the deck and retaining wall may not be consistent with the historic character of the district or criteria related to heights of fencing.
6. That the existing slope of the yard, and required height for a retaining wall, has not been documented;
7. That illustration of retaining walls is typically accomplished via a section drawing that illustrates the wall and grade on each side;
8. That retaining walls may be permitted to support an existing slope and may not exceed the height of the existing slope;
9. That the proposed retaining wall incorporates the fence and deck in such a way that the features become a continuous and permanent feature.
10. That landscape edging, sidewalks and steps in the back yard, less than 6 feet in height, without changes to the topography of the site and not visible from the public rights of ways at streets or alleys, are not subject to review unless a permit is required;
11. That gravel is generally not considered consistent with the historic landscape or the historic character of the district and further description and illustration is necessary.

**E. HPCA-20-00140 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **Approve Item 1, remove deck, fencing, retaining wall, and various paving in the back yard,** with the specific findings that the proposed work will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property and complies with all relevant Standards and Guidelines and sections of the Municipal Code, 2020\*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

**Specific Findings:**

1. That the proposed removal of the deck, fencing, paving, and retaining wall do not appear to include removal of historic features;
  2. That removal of the non-historic features has a positive effect on the historic character of the property.
2. **Approve Item 4, relocate window, with the following conditions,** with the specific findings that the proposed work, with the **agreed-upon conditions**, will not have an

adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; the items comply with all relevant Standards and Guidelines and sections of the Municipal Code, 2020\*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

**Specific Findings:**

1. That the window proposed for relocation is currently in the rear 30% of the side elevation of the historic dwelling;
2. That the window proposed for relocation will be located in the rear 30% of the side elevation of the historic dwelling;
3. That the existing window and opening size will remain unchanged beyond the location;

**Conditions:**

1. That wood siding will be used to match the existing where opening is closed;
2. That changes beyond the location of the window may require additional review.
3. **Approve Items 2 and 3, demolish enclosed back porch and construct an addition**, with the specific findings that the proposed work will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; the items comply with all relevant Standards and Guidelines and sections of the Municipal Code, 2020\*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

**Specific Findings:**

1. That additions are allowed on the rear and removal of the altered back porch has no adverse effect on the character of the structure or the district;
2. That the proposed addition is compatible in design, proportion and size to the architectural style of the existing building;
3. That the addition is planned to the back and is not visible from the street right of way and is minimally visible from the alley right of way;
4. That the addition falls within recommended size restrictions and does not alter the overall character of the district by substantially reducing the ratio of built to open space;
5. The addition is differentiated from the historic dwelling by insets and height and relates to and complements the style of the main building as drawn;
6. That the use of different but compatible materials is appropriate.
4. **Continue Items 5, construct deck, 6, construct fence, 8, Construct retaining wall, 9, Pour additional paving; 10, Construct plant bed; 11, Construct steps and gravel walkway**, with the specific finding that additional information is required from the applicant in order to determine whether the action requested is consistent with all relevant Standards and Guidelines and are in compliance with the relevant sections of the Municipal Code, 2020\*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

**Specific Findings:**

1. That the proposed deck appears to be compatible with the building or site to



which it relates in proportion, size, and scale;

2. That the proposed deck is minimally visible from the public right of way;
3. That construction of the deck appears to be dependent upon approval of other proposed items;
4. That opaque fences on side and front facing locations shall not exceed 6 feet in height and shall be located at or behind the 40% mark in the side yard;
5. That placing a fence on top of the deck and retaining wall may not be consistent with the historic character of the district or criteria related to heights of fencing.
6. That the existing slope of the yard, and required height for a retaining wall has not been documented;
7. That illustration of retaining walls is typically accomplished via an section drawing that illustrates the wall and grade on each side;
8. That retaining walls may be permitted to support an existing slope and may not exceed the height of the slope;
9. That the proposed retaining wall incorporate the fence and deck in such a way that the features become a continuous and permanent feature.
10. That landscape edging, sidewalks and steps in the back yard, less than 6 feet in height, without changes to the topography of the site and not visible from the public rights of ways at streets or alleys, are not subject to review unless a permit is required;
11. That gravel is generally not considered consistent with the historic landscape or the historic character of the district and further description and illustration is necessary.

**Additional Information:** Documentation of the existing slope of the yard and height of existing retaining walls and curbs, reduction in height of fencing if it is determined inappropriate by the Commission, documentation of materials and edging for landscape beds and gravel pathways.

*Note: Staff recommendation does not constitute Commission action.*

*\*Relevant Sections of the Municipal Code governing HP/HL Districts are: §59.3300.1-5; §59.4150.4; §59.4250; §59.7250.1-4; §59.7300.1-7; §59.12200.1-4; §59.13300.1-6.*

*Copies of the Standards/Guidelines and Relevant Sections of the Municipal Code, 2020 are available online at [www.okc.gov/planning/hp/index.html](http://www.okc.gov/planning/hp/index.html) ; at Planning Department offices located at 420 W. Main, 9<sup>th</sup> floor, and each HP Commission Meeting.*

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