



STAFF REPORT

Historic Preservation Commission

June 2, 2021

HPCA-21-00068

Agenda Item: VI. C. 2.

Case Number: HPCA-21-00068

Property Address: 1612 Classen Dr

District: Heritage Hills Historic District

Applicant: LAUD Studio
Brent Wall
220 NW 13th Street, Ste 3
Oklahoma City, OK 73103

Owner: Blake Pinard
1612 Classen Drive
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

A. CASE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Construct fences (elective);
2. Construct walls and install metal screens (elective);
3. Construct pool (elective);
4. Construct pergola (elective);
5. Construct fireplace (elective).

B. BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The applicant proposes the installation of landscape features and fencing, including an outdoor fireplace, pergola, and pool.

2. Location

Project site is located on the northeast side of Classen Drive, east of N Classen Blvd and west of Harn Park.

3. Site History

Date of Construction: 1926

Zoned Historic Preservation/Historical Landmark: 1969

National Register Listing: 1979

Additional Information:

The 1949 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps illustrates a 2-story dwelling with a
Staff Report Page 1 of 12

brick veneer and tile roofing. Two 1-story forms are indicated at the front at the SW and SE corners and a 1-story rear porch is indicated at the NE corner. A narrow, 1-story, frame “autohouse” with small, attached dwelling separated by fire retardant wall is indicated in the NE corner of the rectangular property. The additional triangular portion of the present lot was not included at that time, and the garage did not appear to encroach into the abutting property. The dwelling is indicated with non-combustible roofing (typically tile) and the garage and attached dwelling is indicated with composition roofing, likely a flat roof.

4. Existing Conditions

The HP Commission approved replacement of an addition and rehabilitation of the garage in 2018. Previously approved work appears to be complete. Existing fencing is wood and no other notable landscape features are present at the site.

5. Previous Actions

Numerous CAs have been issued in recent years for repairs to various materials and work to the addition and garage. No other CAs relevant to landscape features have been recorded.

Item 6, Install various permeable and impermeable landscape features, was approved at the previous meeting with the condition that an alternate for the concrete curb be submitted. Included in the attachments is the revision to use simple metal edging as a border for landscape and paving materials.

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, 2010.**

None.

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, 2010 as referenced below:*

1. Item 1, Construct fences (elective).

- a. Description: The applicant proposes to replace existing wood fencing with 6-foot-tall, cedar fencing with cap and trim along the north/west side of the property, connecting to the side of the house approximately 40% back from the front wall of the dwelling, south/east side of the property connecting at the side of the garage, and jogging out to enclose the rear portion of the property. A stucco fence wall with wood gate is proposed at the north end of the property, parallel to NW 16th Street and set back slightly from the property line. The stucco wall is proposed at 6 feet tall at the highest point, with a 5-foot wood gate in the center.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

2.2 Setbacks

Policy: Maintaining historical patterns of development including front and corner

side-yard setbacks is an important character-defining feature of a district.

Design Justification: Historic setback patterns are important for maintaining an authentic streetscape and protecting vistas from, and views to, a historic property and district.

Sustainability Justification: Maintaining historic front and side-yard setbacks ensures the preservation of a district's components, sustaining their embodied energy and negating the need for replacement with new resources.

- 2.2.1: Along a streetscape in a historic district, there is often a uniform and unifying setback for buildings from the street. Maintain consistency with historical setbacks to preserve historic development and historic subdivision patterns.
- 2.2.2: Maintain building orientation patterns, for example, with front facades of primary buildings facing and parallel with the street.
- 2.2.3: Maintain established side-yard setbacks and spacing patterns between buildings to reinforce the sequence of individual structures along the streetscape.

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.

- 2.8.2: 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.
- 2.8.8: 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.
- 2.8.15: 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.

- 2.8.19: 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.
 - 2.8.21: The side of a fence or wall facing the street or alley shall be the “finished” side.
- c. Considerations: The proposed wood fencing has been revised to be consistent with the Guidelines for height. Proposed fencing along NW 16th Street is technically the back property line, which allows for 8 feet but has been lowered to 6 feet.

While the fencing along NW 16th Street is the rear property line for the subject property, it is aligned with the front yard of the property immediately to the east on NW 16th Street. The Guidelines require fencing to be set back behind the open front porch of any adjacent property (2.8.8). 1612 Classen Drive and the property immediately to the west each back up to NW 16th Street, creating an unusual configuration of existing rear fences that extend out forward of the fronts of houses to the east on NW 16th Street. While the unusual configuration of the lots and existing condition of this fencing may warrant flexibility for extending out beyond the front porches of neighboring houses, sensitivity to the impact on neighboring properties in the design, placement, and height of the fence should be considered. Reducing the height to 6 feet appears to match the height of the existing wood fencing and reduces the visual impact of the previously proposed 8-foot-tall fencing.

- d. Recommended Specific Findings:
1. That the design, materials, height and placement of proposed fencing appear to meet relevant Guidelines and to be compatible with the primary structure;
 2. That the configuration of lots and existing fencing along 16th Street support the replacement of the fencing with a fence wall at the same height and location;
 3. That fencing along NW 16th Street should be sensitive to neighboring properties that front along NW 16th Street.

2. **Item 2, Construct walls and screens (elective).**

- a. Description: The applicant proposes to install various masonry walls and decorative metal screens within the back yard. A metal screen/gate is located at the northwest corner of the primary dwelling, screening the HVAC from the backyard. Another screen is located at the northwest end of the yard, adjacent to the pergola and set in a masonry wall. A third screen and gate are proposed between the northeast corner of the dwelling, restricting access from the driveway into the yard and back porch. Proposed screens are 6 feet tall between masonry columns that are also shown as 6 feet tall. Additional “water feature” walls are proposed near the north/west property line and are 1’6” tall.
- 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.

Sustainability Justification: Retain existing elements that represent embodied energy or impart some degree of energy efficiency to the building (e.g., a shading pergola). Address sustainability standards when installing new elements, such as light fixtures with solar cells. Screening with landscaping is preferred over fencing, as fencing requires new resources and energy to manufacture and transport. Landscaping with native and low-water plants conserves water.

- 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.
- 2.5.4: Retain and preserve historic porch lights. They may be refurbished for modern electrical wiring and equipment in order to use modern lamps or light bulbs.
- 2.5.5: Pool slides, play equipment and tree houses in back yards are not subject to review unless a building or other permit is required by the Municipal Code.
- 2.5.6: Preserve existing historic pergolas or trellises as they are character-defining features of a historic building and property (see also 3.4, Pergola or Freestanding Trellis).
- 2.5.7: Preserve and maintain original light fixtures in front yards.
- 2.5.8: Maintain existing, successful drainage patterns to minimize run-off, which can contain herbicides and pesticides, introducing them into the waste water system.

- 2.5.9: Unobtrusive foot-lighting may be installed along pathways. Solar-powered fixtures are encouraged.
- 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.
- 2.5.11: Actions beyond maintenance have the potential to alter a site or building, which could affect their historic character.
- 2.5.12: The introduction of new materials visible from the public right-of-way will likely be sustainability considerations and require administrative review.
- 2.5.13 Landscape elements that are not visible from any public way and otherwise meet all relevant guidelines may be administratively approved.
- 2.5.14: 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.
- 2.5.19: Adding a pergola (see also 3.4, Pergola or Freestanding Trellis) to a back elevation can help shade an outdoor space and can offer some degree of shade to the interior, which means added energy efficiency. Do not add a pergola or trellis to a prominent elevation where none historically existed. Reconstruction of a missing pergola or trellis should be based on accurate evidence of the original design.
- 2.5.20: New pergolas, not visible from the public right of way, may be constructed in back yards, at rear elevations or at accessory structures.
- 2.5.21: New pergolas shall be compatible with the building to which they relate in proportion, size, scale and material.
- 2.5.22: New pergolas constructed as an attachment to a primary or accessory structure shall be reviewed as a building addition and shall not damage or obscure historic character defining features.

- 2.5.23: New pergolas 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.
- 2.5.24: The bottom of the canopy of a new pergola shall not exceed eight (8) feet above the finished floor height of the structure to which it relates, and the overall height of a pergola should not exceed nine (9) feet and shall be compatible with the building to which it relates in proportion, size, scale and material.
- 2.5.25: Freestanding pergolas may have concrete floors; however, permeable flooring materials are recommended. Posts may be set in concrete.
- 2.5.26: Pergolas shall be constructed of wood or sustainable alternative materials that closely resemble wood and may have decorative 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.
- 2.5.27: Pergolas with columns or walls constructed of permanent building materials such as brick, stucco, or stone shall be reviewed as new construction.
- 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.
- 2.5.33: Swimming pools, hot tubs, and similar structures shall be located in back yards and shall not encroach into side setbacks or utility easements.
- 2.5.34: Swimming pools are structures and contribute to the overall built space of the lot, affecting drainage conditions of the lot and adjacent properties; therefore, impermeable pool decks shall be constructed to direct water away from surrounding structures and toward storm drains, French

drains, or water harvesting containers.

- 2.5.35: Significant alteration of the topography of a property through extensive grading, removal or alteration of rolled terraces and similar character-defining features, filling or excavating, is not permitted.
- 2.5.36: Relocating drainage features is discouraged, unless such actions seek to correct poor surface and storm water run-off drainage situations. Storm water harvesting is encouraged.
- 2.5.37: 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 features.
- 2.5.38: Landscape elements such as stone or masonry edging materials for raised planting beds shall not exceed 18 inches in height in front or side yards and shall match or complement the design, scale and details of such elements historically found within the historic district.
- 2.5.39: Illumination of facades with site lighting to highlight ornamental detail may be permitted. Fixtures must be small, shielded and directed toward the building rather than toward the street, so as to minimize glare for neighbors or pedestrians. Incandescent white light is encouraged. Exposed conduit and overhead wiring are not permitted.
- 2.5.40: Use and installation of non-original pole-mounted gas lights in front yards is discouraged; foot lights along walkways are preferred.

Also see Fencing Guidelines, above.

- c. Considerations: The proposed walls and screens function as fencing within the yard, limiting access to parts of the yard and enclosing various spaces. One portion of screening partially encloses an existing, non-historic back porch. The walls and screens meet established limits for the height of fencing. They are not visible or minimally visible from the public right of way and utilize materials supported by the Guidelines. The proposed water feature walls are minimal in height and not visible from the public right of way.
- d. Recommended Specific Findings:
 1. That the proposed walls and screens appear to meet relevant Guidelines for material, height, and placement;
 2. That the proposed water feature walls are minimal in height and not visible from the public right of way.

3. Item 3, Construct pool and item 4, construct pergola.

- a. Description: The applicant proposes the installation of a pool and raised hot tub in the back yard. The pool and hot tub are surrounded by concrete decking. An 8'6" wood pergola is proposed at one end of the pool.

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

See above for landscape features.

- c. Considerations: The Guidelines support the installations of features like swimming pools and pergolas in back yards where not visible or minimally visible from the street. The proposed pool is large but does not appear to be visible from the street or neighboring properties. The proposed pergola appears to meet relevant Guidelines for materials and height. If fence heights are reduced to be consistent with the Guidelines (see item 1 above), the proposed pergola will be visible from neighboring properties above the fence.
- d. Recommended Specific Findings:
1. That the proposed pool and pergola are located in the back yard and are not visible from Classen Drive;
 2. That the proposed pergola may be visible from NW 16th Street and from neighboring properties, depending upon the final height of proposed fencing;
 3. That the proposed pool and pergola appear to meet relevant Guidelines for placement, size, height and materials.

4. Item 5, Construct fireplace.

- a. Description: The applicant proposes the installation of an outdoor fireplace. The proposed structure is located on the north/west side of the property, west of the existing patio. The proposed fireplace has been reduced to 10 feet tall, originally proposed at 10 feet 11 inches, including chimney caps. The main portion of the fireplace is 6 feet wide, with 2-foot wing walls extending out from each side. The fireplace is constructed of stucco masonry to match the primary dwelling and other proposed masonry fence walls.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

See above for landscape features.

- c. Considerations: The Guidelines do not specifically address outdoor fireplaces. The Guidelines state that landscape features should be located in backyards and allow for administrative approval of features that cannot be seen from the public right of way. Guidelines for various accessory structures and buildings encourage height and placement to minimize visibility.

Though in the backyard, the proposed fireplace is beyond the west wall of the primary dwelling and may be visible beyond the fence from the right of way. The proposed structure will be visible from neighboring properties.

- d. Recommended Specific Findings:
1. That the proposed fireplace is taller than allowed for comparable landscape features such as pergolas;
 2. That the proposed fireplace is located where it may be visible from the public right

of way;

3. That the height of the proposed fireplace has been reduced from the original proposal and may further minimize the visibility from the public right of way;
4. That the proposed fireplace utilizes materials and design components that meet the Guidelines and are compatible with the primary structure.

E. HPCA-21-00068 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. Approve Item 1, install fences,** with the specific findings that the proposed work will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; and that 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 design, materials, height and placement of proposed fencing appear to meet relevant Guidelines and to be compatible with the primary structure;
 2. That the configuration of lots and existing fencing along 16th Street support the replacement of the fencing with a fence wall at the same height and location;
 3. That fencing along NW 16th Street should be sensitive to neighboring properties that front along NW 16th Street.
- 2. Approve Item 2, construct walls and screens,** with the specific findings that the proposed work will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; and that 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 proposed screens appear to meet relevant Guidelines for material, height, and placement;
 2. That the proposed water feature walls are minimal in height and not visible from the public right of way.
- 3. Approve Item 3, install pool and Item 4, install pergola** 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 pool and pergola are located in the back yard and are not visible from Classen Drive;
2. That the proposed pergola may be visible from NW 16th Street and from neighboring properties, depending upon the final height of proposed fencing;
3. That the proposed pool and pergola appear to meet relevant Guidelines for placement, size, height and materials.

- 4. Approve Item 5, Construct fireplace** 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 fireplace is taller than allowed for comparable landscape features such as pergolas;
2. That the proposed fireplace is located where it may be visible from the public right of way;
3. That the height of the proposed fireplace has been reduced from the original proposal and may further minimize the visibility from the public right of way;
4. That the proposed fireplace utilizes materials and design components that meet the Guidelines and are compatible with the primary structure.

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 ; at Planning Department offices located at 420 W. Main, 9th floor, and each HP Commission Meeting.

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