

Historic Review Board Policies Work Session

Policy #6: Fences

October 23, 2018



HRB Policies - Purpose

- Staff is authorized by Chapter 17.40.060.D to approve work that meets the HRB Policies
- Administrative approval allows property owners to obtain permits efficiently and quickly
- Administrative approval allows the HRB to focus on applications for new construction and alterations that are more substantive or that do not clearly meet the policies
- Policies apply to:
 - Designated sites in McLoughlin Conservation District
 - Canemah National Register District
 - Individual Landmark sites

Amending HRB Policies - Process

- Work Sessions at HRB meetings
- Community Engagement
 - Neighborhood Association meetings (McLoughlin and Canemah)
 - Mailer to historic property owners
 - Open Houses
- Public Hearing at HRB to adopt new policies

Amending HRB Policies

- The HRB's 2018 Work Plan includes making updates to/adopting new:
 - Fence and Wall policies (Policy #6)
 - Building material policies (Policy #3 Siding, Policy #5 Roofs, Policy #7 Accessory Structures, Policy #8 Alterations)
 - Solar Panels Policy (no specific existing policy)
 - Additional policies identified by the community or the Board

Fences: Implementation & Enforcement

- Most fences and walls do not require building permits
- Property owners who are unaware of HRB policies often erect fences without first obtaining approval from the Planning Department
- Code enforcement process:
 - Send courtesy letter with deadline to contact City and determine a plan to compliance
 - If no contact or if no action, a code case is opened and letter sent with hard deadline to comply with code
 - If deadline passes, a court date is assigned
 - The municipal judge may impose fines if still out of compliance

Existing HRB Fence Policy

- Includes “acceptable” and “not acceptable” materials
- The primary criterion to be used by staff shall be compatibility of the proposed fence or wall with the style and period of the designated structure.
- If the proposal is not on a designated site, the primary criterion shall be compatibility with surrounding historic structures.
- Either staff or applicant shall have the option of referring the plans to the Historic Review Board for resolution of doubtful or contested application of standards.

Other Fence Regulations

- Height: Chapter 17 contains citywide standards - In residential zones, 3.5 feet maximum height in front yards, 6 feet maximum in rear yards. Up to 8 feet permitted for non-residential properties.
- Sight distance: Handled through Chapter 10 of City code.



Acceptable Materials in front yards



Iron Picket/Ornamental
Cast Iron



Brick



Woven Wire



Combinations of iron
and masonry



Wood Picket – flat boards or
square vertical

Not Acceptable in front yards



Chain Link



Post & Rail/Split Rail



Hollow, Twisted
Wrought Iron



Mixed Material Diagonal
Board (e.g. brick/wood/vinyl)



Concrete Block



Stockade



Plywood/Hardboard or
Asbestos Panel

Acceptable in Side/Rear Yards



Concrete Block



Horizontal Board



Staggered Vertical Board
(good neighbor)



Solid wood - flat-topped, clipped
top or capped vertical

Summary of Acceptable Fence Materials

FENCE TYPE	ACCEPTABLE IN FRONT	ACCEPTABLE IN REAR
Iron picket	X	X
Ornamental Cast iron	X	X
Brick	X	X
Combinations of iron and masonry	X	X
Wood picket	X	X
Woven wire	X	X
Concrete block		X
Horizontal Board		X
Staggered Vertical Board		X
Solid wood		X

Design Guidelines for New Construction

- Front Fences
 - Design: Low, open, simple
 - Materials: Painted vertical iron, wooden pickets or slates
 - NOT ALLOWED: chain link, vinyl, split rail, ornate wrought iron, stockade, plywood or hard panel
- Side/Rear fences
 - Materials: Staggered vertical or horizontal boards, Woven wire supported on wood or steel
 - NOT ALLOWED: chain link, vinyl, split rail, stockade, plywood, or hard panel
- Site Walls
 - Materials: Rock, brick, concrete with finishing, mortared or stacked true masonry or stone
 - NOT ALLOWED: Gabion, rip-rap, stacked recycled concrete if unfaced, wood/railroad tie retaining walls in commercial or public setting, use of materials not regionally available during historic period

Design Guidelines for Alterations

- Traditional landscape elements evident in the District (grass, trees, shrubs, picket fences, etc.) should be preserved, and are encouraged in site redevelopment.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Potential Policy Improvements

- Adopt a clear purpose statement
- Provide clear definitions and photos of fence/wall types
- Bring policies in line with design guidelines
- Clarify when the policy is applicable
- Address modern materials and products
- Provide guidance on compatibility for various styles, sites, and periods

Purpose Statement

Example: Albany, OR

“Fences and gates are an extension of the architecture of the house. The right fence design can pay big dividends in an attractive feature that unites the building and landscape while enhancing privacy, establishing property boundaries, and protecting children and pets. Fences on Albany’s historic properties do not have to be historical re-creations, but they look best when their scale, design, and materials harmonize with the size, style, and period of the house. According to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, additions such as fences **“should be compatible with the size, scale, material and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.”**

Applicability

- Current Policies apply to:
 - Designated sites in McLoughlin Conservation District
 - Canemah National Register District
 - Individual Landmark sites
- Side/Rear fences: all, or only those that are visible from right of way?
- Public capital improvements?

Materials not addressed in current policy



Metal other than iron



Poured concrete



Hog wire



Recycled concrete



Chain link hedge slats



Gabion walls

Compatibility

- McLoughlin District
- Canemah District
- Landmarks
- Styles and Periods:
 - Bungalow (1905 to 1930)
 - Queen Anne (1885 to 1905)
 - Vernacular
 - Gothic Revival (1850 to 1880)
 - Foursquare (1900 to 1920)

Compatibility

Example: Albany, OR Fence Guidelines

- New or reclaimed iron fencing may be appropriate for grander pre-1900 houses. Iron fencing is generally not appropriate for later houses.
- Builders during the **Victorian** era (1870-1905) ornamented their houses and porches with carved brackets, corbels, fretwork, and turned wood, but often wood fences were sedate and understated. Period photos often show smoothly carved, pointed, stone, or wood posts holding panels of square pickets painted in a neutral tone, so as not to upstage the house and grounds. A common form of picket fence design to enclose yards was three horizontal rails equally spaced, with short, pointed pickets that rise just above the middle rail, alternating with longer pickets that rise above the top rail.
- Fencing for a **Gothic Revival** house (1850-1880) can reflect medieval influences with pointed-arch pickets and posts, or with palings and rails carved to resemble open tracery. For a more elaborate touch, finials might be carved like spires, and the gate could mimic a pointed arch with quatrefoil and trefoil patterns carved into its posts. Finishing with a dark-color paint or stain would also be appropriate.

