

**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**STAFF REPORT**

**DATE:** APRIL 2, 2019

**TO:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (AFTER-THE-FACT) – FRONT YARD FENCE AND DRIVEWAY GATE  
288 MARKHAM PLACE (MARKHAM PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT)

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Affirm that the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness was subject to environmental review in the Categorical Exemption adopted by the Hearing Officer for Minor Variance #11896 for this same project on February 6, 2019 and that there are no changed circumstances or new information which would require further environmental review.
2. Find that no protected native, specimen, or landmark trees under the tree protection ordinance (Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Ch.8.52), will be removed by the new construction.
3. Find that the project complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts; and
4. Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of the fence and driveway gate as illustrated in Attachment A, subject to the following condition, which shall be subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building or zoning permit.

**Condition:**

1. The applicant shall explore alternatives to replace the faux candles of the light fixtures with standard lightbulbs that do not simulate the appearance of candles, or replace the transparent glass with an opaque glass so that the faux candles cannot be seen.

## **BACKGROUND:**

This two-story Colonial Revival style house was constructed in 1908 and is a non-contributing resource to the Markham Place Historic District. The house is a non-contributing building in the district because it was altered after the period of significance (1887-1937). The original residence was constructed in 1908 in a vernacular style with English Arts and Crafts influences. However, in the 1920s, the building was repositioned 22 feet to the south on the same property, creating additional setback from the street. In addition, in 2000, a major remodel was completed, which included a new porch, a new west wing, a new east/rear addition, and a complete remodel of the garage.

The application and supplemental information provided by the applicant indicate an original fence, a driveway gate, and two pillars on each side of the driveway, were located approximately 1 ½" to 2" from the front property line. The plans submitted also show that the fence, driveway gate, and pedestrian gate were replaced with a new 3'-10" tall front yard fence and a new pillar 4'-0" in height was constructed adjacent to the pedestrian gate. The plan shows the fence and gates are set back 7 ½" from the front property line, where the required setback is 18" from the front property line. However, the new structures were installed without the benefit of submitting for a Zoning Permit, which would have identified the non-compliant front setback. Because the improvements were required to comply with current development standards identified for walls and fences located within single-family residential zoning districts, a Minor Variance was required to allow the deviation from the front yard setback standard.

On April 23, 2018, a code compliance case (CTP2018-00569) was created for the subject site. The City issued a warning notice to the property owners to obtain all required permits for fencing. On May 11, 2018, following the warning notice, the applicant submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the Design & Historic Preservation Section, for the installation of a fence within a landmark district. The Certificate of Appropriateness application was deemed incomplete for processing on July 3, 2018, pending the Variance approval, which was granted on February 6, 2019.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The applicant is requesting an after-the-fact approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a 3'-10" tall picket-style front yard fence constructed of metal 2"x4" tubular steel posts with 2"x4" tubular steel top and bottom rails, a pedestrian gate made of the same material, and a driveway gate also made of the same material. The proposal also includes one new 4'-0" tall concrete pillar to match two existing pillars, and new English style light fixtures with faux candles. The fence portion consists of vertical pickets with a top and bottom rail and the pedestrian and driveway gates have a concentric square design.

## **ANALYSIS:**

Pursuant to PMC Section 17.62.090, the construction of front yard fences and walls in a historic or landmark district is considered a "major project" and requires a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the Historic Preservation Commission serving as the review authority at a noticed public hearing. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for front-yard fences

within a designated landmark district regardless of the property's status as a contributing or non-contributing resource to the district.

According to PMC Section 17.62.090 E.3.b, approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based on the following finding:

*If a project is an alteration or new construction, the project complies with the Secretary's Standards or adopted guidelines based on the Secretary's Standards.*

The project was reviewed using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, which are based on the Secretary's Standards. The applicable standards and guidelines include:

### **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

- Standard 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- Standard 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

### **Design Guidelines for Historic Districts:**

- Policy: "A fence should be in character with those used traditionally and relate to the principal structure on a lot. When used historically, fences were typically wood picket or wrought iron."
- 10.7: "Where a new fence is needed, it should be similar in character with those seen historically. A fence that defines a front yard or a side yard on a corner lot is usually low to the ground and "transparent" in nature. Traditionally fences were less than the permitted four feet. Therefore, consider a fence that is three feet in height. New fence design and materials that are similar to those used historically are appropriate. The design and materials of a new fence should be compatible with the character of the house and neighborhood."
- 10.8: "A combination of fencing and screening vegetation may be appropriate. Chain link, concrete block, un-faced concrete, plastic, fiberglass, plywood and mesh 'construction fences' are inappropriate. Cast metal ornamentation and carriage lamps are inappropriate. A wood fence should be painted or stained."

As conditioned, the simple design, height, and location of the proposed fence would be compatible with the historic character of the neighborhood. The Markham Place Historic District features a variety of different fencing, including solid wooden fences, block walls, wooden picket fences, and metal fences with pickets. The proposed white painted metal

fence material is similar in design to the previous fence and the metal material is consistent with the variety of other fence materials found elsewhere in the district. However, staff recommends a condition of approval that the faux candles in the light fixtures be replaced with lightbulbs or that the transparent glass be replaced with opaque glass, as faux candles are not consistent with the character of the surrounding context, and the use of conjectural features is discouraged.

**CONCLUSION:**

Upon implementation of the proposed condition of approval, the proposed fence would be consistent with the applicable design guidelines and be an appropriate and compatible new feature in the Historic District. The proposed condition of approval would ensure that the proposed light fixtures do not appear as a conjectural feature and enhance compatibility with the surrounding Historic District.

Respectfully Submitted,



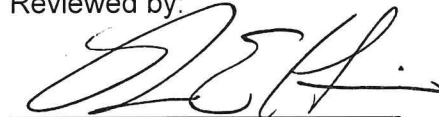
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Attachments:

- A. Application Submittal, Including Plans and Photographs