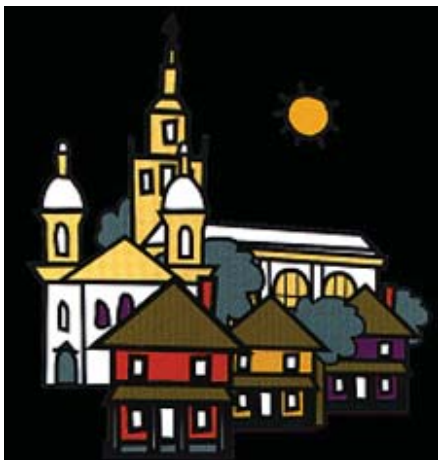




Fencing and Wall Guidelines



PRESERVATION INFORMATION SERIES • NO. 6

NOTE: A variance will be required from the City's Board of Zoning Adjustment for fences proposed in a front yard (and side yard for corner lots) above four-feet, and for fences proposed above six-feet in the side and rear yards in accordance with *Chapter 27: Fences and Walls*.

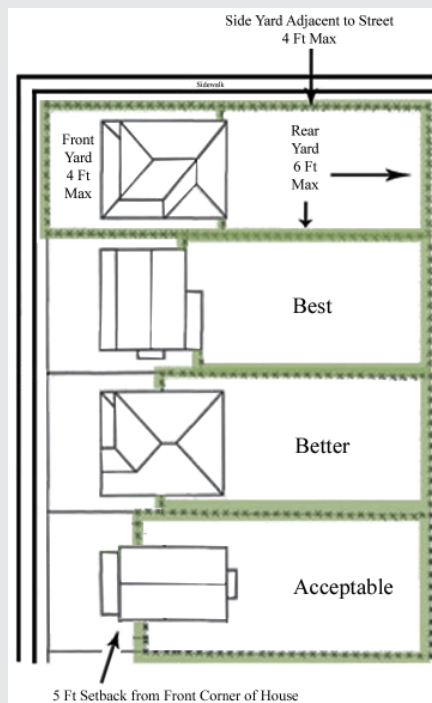


Historically, front yard fencing may or may not have been common in Kansas City neighborhoods depending on the age and character of the area. Where fences existed in residential neighborhoods, they were kept low and transparent as not to detract from the house or views of the surrounding neighborhood. The compatibility of proposed fencing will be evaluated by the commission in terms of design, materials, size, location, and its relationship to the historic district.

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Adopted June 28, 2013

The Historic Preservation Commission will review all applications for fencing and will evaluate such applications in terms of design, materials, size, location and its relationship to the historic district. Historically, front yard fencing may or may not have been common in a Kansas City neighborhood depending on the age and character of the area. The design of streets and homes encouraged interaction between neighbors. Good examples include front porches, sidewalks, and property lines that are defined simply by low shrubbery instead of high fences, which are common in the historic areas of Kansas City. Where fences existed in residential neighborhoods, they were kept low and transparent as not to detract from the house or views of the surrounding neighborhood.



Fences in the front and side yards adjacent to the street should have a maximum height of four feet and be transparent to allow for visibility of the building. Side and Rear yard fencing should be set back one foot from the front plane of the house and use compatible materials. Fencing should not extend in front of a porch and obscure the defining features of the front facade.

1. Original historic fencing and wall material should be maintained and preserved where possible.
2. New fences may be used to define yard edges and installed in locations commonly seen throughout the district. New front yard fencing should be transparent and not obscure the architectural details of the building. Examine the historic character of the neighborhood and the architectural character of the house to determine if a front yard fence is appropriate.
3. Fencing proposed for along public walkways should be set back a two feet where able to maintain a historic sense of open space and to allow for plantings.

4. A side yard fence may be taller than their front yard counterparts, but the taller portion should be located behind the front plane of the house. Side yard fencing should be set back from the front corners of the house.
5. All treated wood fencing should be painted or stained. Natural wood should be left unfinished or painted based on the historic context of the neighborhood and the architectural character of the property.
6. Hedges may be used as fencing. If incorporated today, keep the height of hedges low (under four-feet in the front & side yards). Refer to *Information Series No. 2: Trees and Planting Beds* for additional information.
7. All new materials will have to be evaluated for their compatibility with property and the surrounding historic area. Modern materials such as vinyl is typically inappropriate due to the incompatible finish.
8. Privacy fencing should be limited to the rear and side yards not adjacent to the street, or possibly as screening to an adjacent commercial use. Contemporary fencing designs such as “dog-eared” fencing is inappropriate in these locations.
9. Consider giving privacy fencing a semi-transparent quality by, for example, staggering the fence boards on either side of the fence rail or using lattice on the upper portions of the fence.
10. If fencing is installed atop a retaining wall, the fence should be set back at least two feet.
11. Fencing should be set back five feet from the front corner of the house and not extend in front of a porch or obscure the defining features of the front facade



Fences should be low and reflect the house style. The Queen Anne home on the left utilizes an elaborate iron fence, while a wooden picket fence blends well with the vernacular home on the right.

Fencing Materials

Appropriate Fencing Material:

wood picket
wood slat
wrought iron
brick
stone
stucco over masonry
historically appropriate wire fences
aluminum or steel that appears to be iron
wood privacy (in rear & side yards only)
natural hedging

Inappropriate Fencing Material:

chain link
post and rail
unstuccoed concrete block
un-faced concrete
pvc (polyvinyl chloride)
plywood or asbestos panels
steel mesh
fiberglass
rebar
cyclone



Not Recommended

Installing a fence atop a retaining wall



Recommended

Setting back a fence from a retaining wall and adding plantings



Not Recommended

Obscuring the front facade



Recommended

Maintaining an open relationship

Security

Many people build fences and walls for security. *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) is used to describe a series of physical design characteristics that maximize resident control of criminal behavior within a residential community. The same design concepts improve the ability of police to monitor activities within the community.

The principle here is “know thy neighbor.” The design of streets and homes should encourage interaction between neighbors. Good examples include front porches, sidewalks, and property lines that are defined simply by low shrubbery instead of high fences, which are common in the historic areas of Kansas City. There are four areas that of CPTED that holistically address security concerns: Natural Access Control, Natural Surveillance, Territorial Reinforcement and Maintenance. If you consider installing fencing for security reasons, you may look at all of these items to address your overall security needs.

Natural Access Control

- Use walkways and landscaping to direct visitors to the proper entrance and away from private areas.

Natural Surveillance

- Fully illuminate all doorways that open to the outside.
- Provide appropriate illumination to sidewalks and areas of the yard.
- Properly select and install landscaping so that it allows unobstructed views of vulnerable doors and windows from the street and other properties.

Territorial Reinforcement

- Define property lines and private areas with plantings, pavement treatments, or fences, but make sure to provide transparency of fencing or plantings so natural surveillance is not impeded.
- Make the street address clearly visible from the street and alley with numbers a minimum of six inches high and distinctly or easily read.

Maintenance

- Keep trees and shrubs trimmed back from windows, doors, and walkways.
- Uncut grass and weeds make a home or area look like it is not inhabited. It sends a message to criminals that no one cares and may be inviting to criminals to victimize the property. Consider planting new shrubs that will only grow to 2 ½ - 3 feet tall. Trees should be trimmed up from the ground a minimum of four feet.
- Use exterior lighting at night, and keep it all in working order.
- Keep litter and trash picked up and the yard neat at all times.
- The house and garage should be kept in good repair.

If you have specific questions, please call the Historic Preservation Office.

We are happy to help owners with the preservation of Kansas City's historic treasures.