(p. 11)

Purpose and Applicability of the Design Standards ~~Guidelines~~

Montford is recognized as a unique place which should be protected as a community resource. It represents a significant part of Asheville's heritage and its historic character is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

The design standards ~~guidelines~~ are rooted in the description of the historic character of the neighborhood as provided by the Montford Area Historic District National Register nomination, as well as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and are intended to provide guidance to property owners within the Montford Historic District in planning exterior changes to their properties and to assist the Historic Resources Commission in reviewing the appropriateness of all proposed changes throughout the historic district. The standards ~~guidelines~~ attempt to balance the need to alter or add to a historic property in order to meet continuing and changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

Amending Guidelines

It is recognized that the guidelines are not static, and may need to be amended or updated periodically. A property owner or Historic Resources Commissioner may make a request in writing to the Chair of the HRC for a hearing before the Commission at its general monthly meeting to consider amendments to the Guidelines. Changes to the guidelines shall be approved by a majority vote of the Commissioners in attendance at the hearing.

(p. 36-37)

Fences and Walls

~~Fences were not intrinsic elements in Montford at its inception.~~ As with many other older neighborhoods the streetscape was considered a community asset, providing open views and vistas of the natural setting. ~~Instead, I~~Low stone retaining walls often combined with shrubbery were often used to define front lawns and property lines and also served to accommodate significant shifts in grade. Some were ornamented with chains or cast iron gates, reflecting popular architectural styles of the day.

Over time various fences have been introduced for utilitarian and decorative purposes. By the turn of the century, wrought iron and Victorian cast iron fences were present in Montford. Another common style of fencing was constructed of vertical wooden posts and loop wire. These generally followed the property lines or were inset slightly to provide an outer planting strip. Although chain link fences were later introduced in the neighborhood, they never existed historically and are therefore discouraged.

Maintenance and Other Considerations

Follow these basic principles in the maintenance and repair of fences and walls:

• Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, corrosion, structural damage or settlement, vegetation, and fungal or insect infestation.
• Routinely clean and protect the wood and metal elements of fences and masonry elements of walls through appropriate surface treatments.
• Provide adequate drainage to prevent water from standing on flat, horizontal surfaces and collecting on decorative elements or along wall foundations. Avoid direct contact of wood or metal picket with ground moisture.
• Repoint stone or other masonry walls as necessary
• Ensure that retaining walls are structurally sound, adequately supported and draining properly.

The Montford Area Historic District National Register nomination, which outlines the historic narrative for the neighborhood and acts as a foundation for these standards, describes some streets in the district as having open vistas. As such, ~~the~~ installation of fences in front yards where they did not exist historically ~~is strongly discouraged~~ may not be considered appropriate by the HRC, especially for properties that can accommodate fenced areas in a side or rear yard, as it changes the historic character of the streetscape and introduces a distinct visual boundary where none previously existed. ~~However, i~~ If a new fence is proposed for a specific property, it should be similar in height and design to other historic fences and be compatible with the architectural style of the house. Incompatible contemporary materials such as vinyl are not considered appropriate.

Guidelines: Fences and Walls

1. Retain and preserve historic fences and walls that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or a site.

2. Retain, preserve and maintain fence & wall materials that contribute to the character of the fence or wall. It is not appropriate to cover historic fences or walls with contemporary substitute coatings or materials.

3. Replace in kind any portion of a historic fence or wall that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, configuration, texture, material and color as close as possible.

4. Site new fences or walls in locations that are compatible with the traditional historic relationship of fences and walls to historic properties in the district.

5. Acceptable materials for all fences include metal pickets, wood pickets, wrought or cast iron or loop wire. Walls may be stone, brick or concrete. All materials must be finished. Non-traditional materials will be considered on a case by case basis.

6. The purpose of wire fencing is to provide a boundary, where appropriate, that is less visible within the landscape and does not appear as an architectural feature. Cross and horizontal members are not appropriate, except at corners or when a gate is proposed, in which case only horizontal members are appropriate.

7. Fences in front yards or side yard of a corner lot should not exceed 4 feet in height (including posts and finials) and should be no more than 65% solid. Where fences higher than 48 inches are considered appropriate, the density shall be no greater than 50% solid. It is not appropriate to introduce vinyl, plastic, or chain link fencing in a front yard. Wooden fences in front yards were not traditional and may not be appropriate for prominent historic properties.

8. Corner lots are treated as having two front yards, and in these locations the ~~guidelines~~ standards for front yard fencing shall apply.

9. Fences in the front yard shall not be allowed on top of retaining walls, ~~but~~ and shall be set back a minimum of 4 feet.

10. Rear-yard fences may be up to 6 feet in height and up to 100% solid. Rear yard fences may sometimes extend into the side yard depending on the architectural style and features of the house. At minimum they must be set back at least 1 foot behind the front façade.

11. Chain link fencing is strongly discouraged but allowed provided it is dark in color, setback five feet from the property line and screened with vegetation. Chain link fencing will not be permitted in a rear yard that faces a public alley or street or in the side yard.

12. Design new fences and walls in keeping with the historic character of the neighborhood and architectural style of the house.

(p. 88)

Guidelines: Additions

1. Site new additions as inconspicuously as possibly, preferably on rear elevations and where historic character defining features are not damaged, destroyed or obscured. Additions to side elevations may be considered appropriate if the proposed addition will not impact an existing porch, entryway, exterior chimney or other character-defining features, the proposed addition is clearly subordinate to the existing building and sufficiently set back from the front/primary building plane, and a sufficiently sized side yard exists.

2. Additions on ~~the~~ a front elevation will not be allowed.

3. Additions to rear elevations shall be inset ~~additions~~ from rear building corners to differentiate them from the existing building and to reduce public visibility.

4. Design additions so they are compatible with the existing building in height, massing, roof form and pitch.

5. Reduce the visual impact of an addition on a historic building by limiting its scale and size; additions should be designed to be sufficiently subordinate to the existing structure and should not overpower the site or substantially alter the site's proportion of built area to green space.

6. Windows in additions should be similar to those in the original buildings in their proportions, spacing, and materials.

7. Select exterior surface siding and details that are compatible with the existing building in material, texture, color, and character.

8. Construct additions, if feasible, to be structurally self supporting to reduce damage to the historic building. Attach additions in such a way that loss of historic material or details is minimized.

9. Foundations and eaves or other major horizontal elements, should not generally align on buildings and their additions so as to differentiate new from old.

10. Protect mature trees, significant site and landscape features from damage during or as a result of construction by minimizing ground disturbance; a tree protection plan is required for mature trees.

11. It is not appropriate to construct an addition if the overall proportion of building mass to open space on its site will significantly vary from the surrounding buildings and sites that contribute to the special character of the historic district.