



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION
OSBORN ROOM, BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
305 S. EAST ST., BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701
THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024, 5:00 PM

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Public Comment

Individuals wishing to provide emailed public comment must email comments to publiccomment@cityblm.org at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. Individuals wishing to speak in-person may register at cityblm.org/register at least 5 minutes before the start of the meeting.

4. Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

- A. Review and approval of the minutes of the March 21, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission. (Recommended Motion: Motion to accept the minutes, as presented.)

5. Regular Agenda

- A. BHP-06-24 - Consideration, and action on a request submitted by Jim Neeley for a Certificate of Appropriateness for overhead garage door replacement, with minor expansion, for the property at 33 Sunset Road, PIN 14-34-402-016. (Recommended Motion: Motion to approve or disapprove, with or without Conditions, of the proposed scope of work for the requested Certificate of Appropriateness.)

6. New Business

- A. Attached Resource: "Fences in Historic Districts" by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (May 2006). (Recommended Motion: None; educational only.)

7. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities planning to attend the meeting who require reasonable accommodations to observe and/or participate, or who have questions about the accessibility of the meeting, should contact the City's ADA Coordinator at 309-434-2468 or mhurt@cityblm.org.



REGULAR AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.A.

FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: April 18, 2024

WARD IMPACTED: City-Wide Impact

SUBJECT: Review and approval of the minutes of the March 21, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Motion to accept the minutes, as presented.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINK:

Goal 1. Financially Sound City Providing Quality Basic Services

STRATEGIC PLAN SIGNIFICANCE:

Objective 1c. Engaged residents that are well informed and involved in an open governance process

BACKGROUND: In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Commission Proceedings must be approved thirty (30) days after the meeting or at the second subsequent regular meeting whichever is later.

COMMUNITY GROUPS/INTERESTED PERSONS CONTACTED: N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

Respectfully submitted for consideration.

Prepared by: Alissa Pemberton

ATTACHMENTS:

[HPC DRAFT Minutes 2024-03-21](#)



**DRAFT MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION
THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024, 5:00 PM**

The Historic Preservation Commission convened in regular session at 5:01 PM, March 21, 2024. Chair Greg Koos called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Paul Scharnett	Commission Vice Chair	Present (5:02PM)
Dawn Peters	Commissioner	Present
Sarah Lindenbaum	Commissioner	Absent
John Elterich	Commissioner	Present
Emma Meyer	Commissioner	Present
Mark Adams	Commissioner	Present
Greg Koos	Commission Chair	Present

City Staff present included Alissa Pemberton, City Planner; John Myers, Assistant City Planner; and Kelly Pfeifer, Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development.

Commission Vice Chair Scharnett arrived at 5:02PM.

Public Comment

Jim Neely and David Dow presented a statement regarding the preservation of the Jens Jenson Bridge, located on Sunset Road. The gentlemen stated they were looking for the bridge to be designated as a local historical landmark. They noted the bridge's history and stated the condition of the bridge is declining due to heavy construction traffic. They noted the neighborhood is working on generating funds to repair the façade, but they would like the City to implement a weight limit to protect the bridge from future heavy vehicle traffic.

Cody Sheldon introduced himself as a resident of a home designed and lived in by Paul Moratz. He stated his interest in designating the home in the future and welcomed Commission input.

Bill Kemp introduced himself as the Librarian/Archivist for the McLean County Museum of History. The Museum is going to start alternating attendance at Commission meeting between the Town and City as part of their monitoring efforts and offered to assist in resource identification for historic preservation efforts.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Item 4.A. Review and approval of the minutes of the January 18, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission.

Commission Vice Chair Scharnett made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Roll call.

AYES: Koos; Scharnett; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. BHP-03-24 - Public hearing, consideration and action on a request initiated by the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission for the Designation of Holy Trinity Catholic Church and Rectory as Local Landmarks, and to pursue application of the S-4 (Historic Preservation District) Overlay, for the property between N. Center Street and N. Main Street, known as 704 N. Main St. (Part of PIN 21-04-135-001).

Ms. Pemberton presented the Staff Report with a recommendation to designate the Holy Trinity Catholic Church and Rectory as Local Landmarks and to pursue application of the S-4 (Historic Preservation District) Overlay. She gave a brief history of the property noting when the structures were constructed and the cultural impact of the property. She noted key architectural features of the Church and Rectory, as described in the Staff Report and included in the proposed Resolution, including exterior materials, window and door composition and fenestration, roofing, and decorative components. Additionally, she stated that it is important for the Ordinance to reflect the key architectural features.

Chair Koos commented on the stainless-steel guttering on the Rectory. He stated that Paul Moratz, a Bloomingtonian Architect, did work for the parish in the 1950s. He noted that it may not be original, however it is a part of the structure's history and has clear visual impact. Vice Chair Scharnett noted the band may have been added to mimic the visual on the Church building which had been constructed by that time.

Chair Koos added that the type of brick used for the Church is called "tapestry" brick.

Ms. Pemberton amended the proposed Resolution with the guttering item and materials clarification.

Chair Koos opened the Public Hearing.

Neil Finlen (1113 Broadway, Normal) provided a statement in favor of the designation. He provided a brief history of other preservation efforts of the parishioners over time. He stated there have been efforts to help current parishioners understand the historical significance of the structures. Additionally, he stated that he believes this is important for the community at large.

Elaine Rinehimer (1506 Sweetbriar Drive) provided a statement on behalf of the Peoria Diocese and presented a written letter to the Staff. She stated the Diocese “declined consideration of the designation” and was unavailable to attend the hearing.

Chair Koos closed the Public Hearing.

Vice Chair Scharnett asked Staff to provide a quick explanation of the implications and benefits of S-4 designation.

Ms. Pemberton stated that S-4 designation requires additional review through the course of building permits, for the exterior of the structure, to safeguard characteristic features of protected properties. She added that S-4 designation also makes properties eligible for annual City Funk Grant funding, as well as State tax benefits. Additionally, she explained all the procedural steps and requirements involved with the Designation, per current Zoning Code, and clarified that it *does not prevent* demolition or alteration of protected structures but provides a process and timeline that allow appropriate vetting of potential significant changes to these special places.

Chair Koos stated that he believes the Church and Rectory are some of the most important buildings in McLean County. He added that he worked on the original designation for the National Historic Registry and noted the design history of the Church.

Commission Vice Chair Scharnett made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elterich, to establish findings of fact that both existing structures on the subject property meet the criteria to be classified as a Local Landmark, and to apply such status to both.

Roll call.

AYES: Koos; Scharnett; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed.

Commissioner Adams made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elterich, to recommend application of the S-4 (Historic Preservation District) Overlay zoning for the property located at 704 N. Main Street, (PIN 21-04-135-001 between Center Street and Main Street), to the Planning Commission.

Roll call.

AYES: Koos; Scharnett; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed.

Commission Vice Chair Scharnett made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elterich, to adopt the proposed Resolution as presented and amended.

Roll call.

AYES: Koos; Scharnett; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.B. Consideration, prioritization, and possible award of surplus FY24 Rust Grant funding.

Ms. Pemberton stated some projects funded for FY24 came in under budget and one withdrew, resulting in surplus in FY24 Rust Grant fund. She proposed funding already-approved projects, in the order of their original priority ranking from the FY24 review.

Commissioner Meyer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elterich, to amend the Commission decision of June 15, 2023, related to case BHP-24-23, to allocate and award up to \$6,759.12 of FY24 Rust Grant funding to the Porch Painting project at 102-116 W. Locust Street.

Roll call.

AYES: Koos; Scharnett; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed.

New Business

The following item was presented:

Item 6.A. Discussion of 405 W. Market Street (George Miller Home), requested by Chair Koos.

Chair Koos stated that the owner of 405 W. Market Street, the George Miller Home, recently passed. He added that the commission should carefully consider how to approach the new owner. Commissioner Peters stated that she plans to review the property soon and may be able to provide additional information at the following meeting.

Item 6.B. Discussion of the Jens Jenson Bridge, requested during public comment.

Chair Koos stated that an approach to protecting this bridge needs to be identified.

Commissioner Elterich asked what the main concerns are. Ms. Pemberton stated a structural evaluation had been completed by the City's Engineering department, related to the safety of traffic use in the current condition, however this may not have included the force being applied to the façade which could have different triggers for damage based on the age or composition. She stated Staff will speak with City Engineering to gain more information on the results of the evaluation and inquire what the process may be for moving forward on preservation and restoration of the façade. She added that they have already agreed to allow placement of an educational sign (if provided to them), and Staff will look at how Normal handles preservation of their historic bridges.

Jim Neely stated the neighborhood goal is to provide educational elements, repair the cosmetic elements, and receive guidance on getting a weight limit restriction to protect the façade.

Item 6.C. Commissioner Adams Introduction.

Commissioner Adams introduced himself. He stated he currently works for the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, primarily focusing on housing, but has an

educational background in History. He added that he understands the importance of place-making and that historic preservation is an essential component.

Adjournment

Commission Vice Chair Scharnett made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll call.

AYES: Koos; Scharnett; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed.

The Meeting Adjourned at 6:22PM

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Greg Koos, Chair

Alissa Pemberton, Staff Liaison



REGULAR AGENDA ITEM NO. 5.A.

FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: April 18, 2024

WARD IMPACTED: Ward 4

SUBJECT: BHP-06-24 - Consideration, and action on a request submitted by Jim Neeley for a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for overhead garage door replacement, with minor expansion, for the property at 33 Sunset Road, PIN 14-34-402-016.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Motion to approve or disapprove, with or without Conditions, of the proposed scope of work for the requested Certificate of Appropriateness.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINK:

Goal 1. Financially Sound City Providing Quality Basic Services

Goal 5. Great Place - Livable, Sustainable City

STRATEGIC PLAN SIGNIFICANCE:

Objective 1d. City services delivered in the most cost-effective, efficient manner

Objective 5b. City decisions consistent with plans and policies

BACKGROUND: The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing overhead garage door with a slightly wider model of the same style, color, and height, to allow full access to the existing structure by modern vehicles. The scope of work includes removal of the existing door (15-ft), reframing for the larger opening (18-ft), installation of the new flush-panel door, and trimming out with the same exterior trim profile and color.

COMMUNITY GROUPS/INTERESTED PERSONS CONTACTED: N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

Respectfully submitted for consideration.

Prepared by: Alissa Pemberton

ATTACHMENTS:

[BHP-06-24 - Staff Report](#)

TO: City of Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Economic & Community Development Department

DATE: April 18, 2024

CASE NO: BHP-06-24, Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

REQUEST: Consideration, review and action on a request submitted by Jim Neeley, for a Certificate of Appropriateness for overhead garage door replacement, with minor expansion, on the property located at 33 Sunset, PIN 14-34-402-016.



Above: Subject property, current day

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Subject property: 33 Sunset

Existing Zoning: R-1A (Single-Family Residence) District with S-4 (Historic Preservation Overlay)

Existing Land Use: Single-Family Dwelling

Property Size: 150' x 350' (52,500 square feet)

HISTORIC INFORMATION

Year Built: 1948
Architectural Style: Mid-Century Modern
Architect: Richard Williams
Historic District: N/A
Alternate Name: Otto and Lucille Beich House

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

According to the Local Designation nomination report, the residence was constructed in 1948 by Richard A. Williams, for Otto and Lucille Beich, and the surrounding property reflects the work of landscape architect Jens Jensen. The property was designated and zoned S-4 in 2023 (Ord. No. 2023-020). The “original garage and its features” is a noted feature of the structure that should be reviewed for appropriateness before construction, alteration, demolition, or removal. The Applicant has not previously received a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoAs) or Funk Grant.

Request

The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing overhead garage door with a slightly wider model of the same style, color, and height, to allow full access to the existing structure by modern vehicles. The scope of work includes removal of the existing door (15-ft), reframing for the larger opening (18-ft), installation of the new flush-panel door, and trimming out with the same exterior trim profile and color.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

For each Certificate of Appropriateness awarded, the Historic Preservation Commission shall be guided by the following general standards in addition to any design guidelines in the ordinance designating the landmark or historic district:

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property that requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.

No change is being made to the property’s current use.

2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural feature should be avoided when possible.

While the semi-attached garage (accessible via breezeway) is a noted feature of the property, the door itself is not specifically called out and the characteristic visual features of it (flush panel and trim profile) will be retained/replaced as part of the proposed project. It is unknown whether the existing garage door is original to the structure; evidence of prior replacement was not identified.

3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own times. Alterations that have no historical basis and that seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.

The proposed work would not alter the appearance of the building to an earlier period.

4. **Changes that may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.**

N/A

5. **Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.**

Stylistic features of the property are being treated with sensitivity through the selection of the same height, panel and trim profile during replacement.

6. **Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence, rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.**

Visual features of the property are being treated with sensitivity through the selection of the same height, panel and trim profile during replacement.

7. **The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.**

N/A.

8. **Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.**

N/A.

9. **Contemporary design for alteration and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.**

The proposed update to the property is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property. No widening of the existing drive or curb-cut is proposed, nor is alternation of the garage structure itself.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW GUIDELINES

The final standard for review requires that, for landmarks, the Commission shall ensure consistency with the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Bloomington Architectural Review Guidelines. The Guidelines primarily stipulate that any replacement materials be

typical to those built in the style of the historic building, retaining as much existing material as possible, and repairing where feasible.

The scope of work proposed by the applicant complies with the subject policies as outlined in the Architectural Review Guidelines, which stresses repair over replacement when feasible.

Under the Architectural Review Guidelines, the following criteria is provided:

Maintain and repair historic garages visible from the street. They may be altered to accommodate contemporary vehicles...

Where driveways and curb-cuts exist, do not widen.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the scope of work meets the relevant standards and policies as presented in the Bloomington Architectural Review Guidelines and recommends that the Commission take the following actions:

Motion to approve the scope of work and request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, as submitted by Jim Neeley, for overhead garage door replacement and expansion on the property located at 33 Sunset.

Respectfully submitted,
Alissa Pemberton
City Planner

Attachments:

1. Image of the location for proposed work
2. Detailed Scope of Work (Quote)

Attachment 1: Image of the location for proposed work

Existing 15' wide garage door



Proposed 18' wide garage door



Attachment 2: Detailed Scope of Work (Quote)

Childers Door Service of Central Illinois, LLC

P.O. Box 233
102 E. Walnut St.
Hudson, IL 61748

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Ph: 309-827-3222 309-485-1015 Fax: 309-726-1907

PROPOSAL

Date	Estimate #
1/17/2024	26702

Name / Address
Neeley, Jim 33 Sunset Dr Bloomington, IL 61701

Customer Contact	
Customer Phone	(708) 486-0290
Customer Fax	
Customer Cell Phone	
Job:	
P.O. No.	

Sales Rep.	JT	We are currently experiencing industry wide EXTENDED lead times up to 12 weeks.		
Description	Qty	U/M	Rate	Total
HAAS COMPLETE DOOR; R-VALUE 13.45 17'-0" X 7'-0" 4S-4P RMT-610M; FLUSH 1.375 ESPRESSO; 10K TORSION 12" STD 2 BRKT WOOD; LITE OPENING 0.0% OF DOOR; TESTED & VERIFIED U-FACTOR 0.106; 1" TUBE; 11-BALL NYLON; 3- 2x2 E Strut; TRK BRKT LOOSE; OPERATOR BRKT; HFO FOAM; 17' Wide Residential door installation labor Up To 17' x 8' 1-1/4" x 1-1/4" x 10' Perforated Angle 14ga.	1		2,211.34	2,211.34
	1	Ea.	680.00	680.00
	1		23.06	23.06
Sergeant II with WiFi 7, 1/2 HP DC chain drive motor. Includes (1) remote, wall station, and photo eyes. Labor to install residential operator.(7' & 8') G891LMC: SEC+2.0 1 BUTTON REMOTE CONTROL 877LM Security+2.0™ rolling code anti-theft technology. Temporary password option. Backlit keypad. Compatible ONLY with Security+2.0™ LiftMaster garage door openers or gate operators. Includes battery (9VOLT), mounting screws and instructions.	1		514.50	514.50
	1		112.50	112.50
	1		65.00	65.00
	1		62.00	62.00
Material to frame opening. 1x4x12' red cedar board, 1x2x8 red cedar, 1x12x8 red cedar, Royal building Azek white pvc trim boards. Plywood sheeting, LVL header materials, treated framing lumber, fasteners, etc. Labor to frame opening to proper size. Remove existing door, remove operator, brace trusses, remove side jambs, remove lights, remove gutter, remove siding/soffit (save to reinstall), remove sheeting, remove old framing. Cut out old concrete curb. Install new header, new sluds, new door bucks, new sheeting, new jambs and trim with Azek, install siding, soffit, gutter, lights.	1		2,519.04	2,519.04
	1		5,312.00	5,312.00

TO ORDER: Return a signed copy of proposal with 75% deposit.

Acceptance and Confirmation

Proposals are valid for 5 days from the date stipulated on the estimate. All prices are subject to change without notification. A deposit of 75% of the total, a signed acceptance of the order is required upon placement of the order. Variations and alterations to the contracted project will be quoted and charged as they arise. All items are subject to manufacturer's availability. We will make our best efforts to inform you if the goods you have ordered are not available or if shipment may be delayed.

CANCELLATION FEE:

A fee of 50% of the total proposed price will be charged for cancellation of a signed proposal.

Installation is based on estimated time frame.

Due to changing weather-as moisture effects how products dry and seal, we may have to reschedule. We will call you a couple of days before to confirm your installation.

____ This job is Prevailing Wage and may require additional procedures.

Accepting Signature _____
Date of Acceptance _____

Subtotal	511,499.44
Sales Tax (6.25%)	50.00
Total	511,499.44

Customer is to provide live grounded outlet within 3' of opener.

**NOT included with this proposal:
ANY ELECTRICAL WORK**



REGULAR AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.A.

FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: April 18, 2024

WARD IMPACTED: City-Wide Impact

SUBJECT: Attached Resource: "Fences in Historic Districts" by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (May 2006).

RECOMMENDED MOTION: None; educational only.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINK:

STRATEGIC PLAN SIGNIFICANCE:

BACKGROUND: With the warmer weather almost upon us, we will likely begin hearing requests for fencing replacement and/or installation. The attached article reviews the how and why of historic fencing, and how the *Secretary of the Interior's Rehabilitation Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* may be applied when reviewing such.

COMMUNITY GROUPS/INTERESTED PERSONS CONTACTED: N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

Respectfully submitted for consideration.

Prepared by: Alissa Pemberton

ATTACHMENTS:

[Fences in Historic Districts](#)

Fences in Historic Districts

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office

May 2006

"While not often found at the front of a city lot, the fence is frequently a delightful feature of the back of the premises, where it may enclose the kitchen garden or perhaps screen a quiet resting spot, for backyards can be used for storing peace and comfort and beauty as well as garbage cans, clothes lines, and rubbish. Fences for such a purpose are usually wood lattice or mesh wire, overgrown with flowering vines. They screen the garden not only from the street, but from the next door neighbor and with their wealth of climbing vines and blossoms give pleasure to all who look upon them."

"Fences, Walls & Hedges." *American Homes & Gardens*. September 1910. Vol. VII, No. 9

"Good fences make good neighbors." This sentiment taken from the poem *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost is applicable today in residential neighborhoods where some degree of privacy or separation may be desired. While there may be truth to the line from Frost's poem, one could argue that what **kind** of fence separates neighbors can play a role in how the neighbors view each other. For example, a six-foot tall, solid privacy fence has a much different impact than a four-foot tall ornamental wire fence.

Fences in Designated Local Historic Districts

Because the issue of fences, fence material, and fence design can become an issue in a historic district, we have developed an opinion on appropriate fence design and materials in local historic districts. Much as we would like to give a firm yes or no on, say, the use of specific modern materials, like vinyl fencing, we don't feel it is appropriate. Fencing material must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine what affect it has on the resource and its feeling and setting.

What follows are some things to consider when reviewing a proposal for modern fencing material.

Applying the Standards

Historic lawn features, such as fences, should be retained and repaired or replaced in kind whenever possible.

Fencing a front yard would typically not have been done historically and should be discouraged.

Any modern fencing material that is used in a local historic district should meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Cultural Landscapes* which state that a feature should be visually compatible in its "mass, scale, form, features, materials, texture or color" to the landscape so that it does not "detract from" or "alter the historic character of" the landscape. Many of the fence designs and materials that can be obtained at home improvement centers do not replicate the look and feel of historic materials and "detracts from" the landscape. The modern fence stands out in the landscape and is not visually compatible with it. Such a fence becomes the central focus of the landscape, not the frame, and thus is not in keeping with gardening trends of the past that set the feeling and setting for a historic home. If modern fencing material meets the Standard then it could be used. A fencing material can never be rejected outright; it must be reviewed in terms of its size, shape, profile, and texture and for its affect on the visual harmony of the landscape. Commissioners should also consider where the fence will be placed, its visibility factor, and its function (decoration, screening, or utilitarian). Example: A vinyl fence at the back of a property that is secluded by hedges may be appropriate. A vinyl fence to screen trash bins on a back alley may be appropriate. A vinyl fence in a front yard is probably not appropriate.

Chain link and wire fence are historically appropriate materials for historic landscapes. The use of vegetation to hide or soften these fences should be encouraged.

High Board privacy fences and lattice fences were commonly used in backyards to screen or create private areas. Modern diagonal lattice was not typical and is not appropriate. Such fences were erected for the decorative value as well as the screen functioning.

Determine the Appropriate Standards

Use the *Secretary of the Interior's Rehabilitation Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* when reviewing landscape features. Under Structures, Furnishings, and Objects these guidelines state:

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

Recommended

Designing and installing a new structure, furnishing or object when required by the new use, which is compatible with the historic character of the landscape.

Not recommended

Placing a new structure, furnishing, or object where it may cause damage, or is incompatible with the historic character of the landscape.

Locating any new structure, furnishing or object in such a way that it detracts from or alters the historic character of the landscape.

Introducing a new structure, furnishing, or object in an appropriate location, but making it visually incompatible in mass, scale, form features, materials, texture or color.

Determine the Historic Context

Whenever possible, historic district commissions should work to collect historic images of the community's historic districts in order to have a foundation of information about the historic character of the district that will assist them in making decisions. If individual photographs of the specific house cannot be found, then use images of the neighborhood or other similar neighborhoods in the community.

Publications from the period are also good sources of information. There are a wide range of landscape architecture and gardening books available at the [Library of Michigan](#) or at your local university library. Many of the books can be accessed through your local library using the [Michigan Electronic Library \(MEL\)](#) system that lets you request books from around the state. Period magazines that deal with landscapes such as *American Homes and Gardens*, *Country Life in America*, *The Craftsman*, *House and Garden*, and *House Beautiful* are on the shelves at the Library of Michigan and at many university libraries. *Old House Journal* is a modern magazine that often has advertisements for reproduction materials that could be used.

The following information regarding yards and fencing was summarized from landscape architecture books and gardening magazines published between 1910 and 1930.

Front Yards

Property owners were encouraged to view front yards as public space. Sweeping open lawns bordered by undulating shrubbery were recommended. Lawns should be united along the street giving an impression of open space. Uniformity in plant choices, such as street trees, was encouraged. Fencing front yards was discouraged. If fencing did occur in the front, it was decorative and served as a frame for the picture of the house on the site.

Side Yards

Side yards should be considered a continuation of the front yard. Open lawns, with perhaps some additional plantings to provide screening for the back yard may be appropriate. Typically, however, enclosing a side yard with a privacy fence is not recommended.

Back Yards

Back yards should be considered to be the area behind the line drawn parallel with the primary rear wall of the structure. For example, on a two-story house with a one-story rear kitchen addition, the back yard should be considered to start at the two-story rear wall. Back yards were viewed as having separate areas with different functions: areas of repose and relaxation; work areas for drying laundry, performing outdoor tasks, or growing vegetable gardens; and service areas for storage or trash bins. Thus fences had three functions: 1) Screening - create areas of privacy or to hide service areas, 2) Decorative - frame vistas or add visual interest to the garden, and 3) Utilitarian - keep out children and animals (they never mention keeping them in!)

Screen Fencing

High Board Fence

What we today would call a privacy fence was considered to be a good choice for screening or for creating privacy in the back yard. A solid fence with a lattice top was considered a "good choice." It was advised that such fences should be in a "subdued color" and "partly concealed by vines and tall shrubs."

Lattice Fences

Wood lattice fences "with their wealth of climbing vines and blossoms give pleasure to all who look upon them." (Note: the wood lattice of the past was not the diagonal slat lattice of today. Slats were perpendicular and openings were square. Openings could be small or large.) One author cautioned that "Lattice is both decorative and utilitarian in purpose; the only danger is using it so freely that it becomes tiresome."

Decorative Fencing

The overriding advice: the simpler the architecture of the house, the simpler the fence designs. For example while decorative iron fencing lent an element of beauty to a country estate, it was thought to be too "formidable" for cottages and bungalows. So, the black aluminum fencing that simulates iron fences and is so popular today is probably too "formidable" for most middle or working class neighborhoods. Picket fencing that didn't obscure the view and let the eye travel over and through it was considered most appropriate for medium to small homes. Simple picket fences with a more elaborate gate way (such as an arbor or a pergola) were encouraged.

Utilitarian Fencing

Wire fence was considered to be the simplest and most effective type of utilitarian fence. "Coarse wire mesh fence hung on an iron frame" was considered to be "almost invisible and really imperative where fruit, vegetables, not to speak of flowers, need protection." Wire fence could be simply utilitarian--single strands of horizontal and vertical wire joined together perpendicularly. The Page Fence Company of Adrian, Michigan, made Style 1648, a 16 bar, 48-inch high fence for "fencing gardens in between town and city lots." The openings were smaller at the bottom to keep out small animals. Another popular--and charming--fence was the more decorative twisted wire fence. This galvanized wire fence had a decorative pattern and finished crown and bottom. A third type of wire fence was chain link fence, which came into popularity in America in the 1890s. Most garden magazines of the early twentieth century encouraged the use of wire fence for its practicality. However, they took issue with its plain,

utilitarian look and encouraged the use of climbing vines and shrubbery to hide it. The use of a wood decorative gate (pergola or arch) attached to a wire fence that was covered in flowering vines or masked with shrubs was encouraged.

Conclusion

In conclusion, local decisions on appropriate fencing should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The history of the district and its landscape features, publications from the period, and National Park Service Guidelines can all be used to assist in an appropriate determination regarding fences. Caution should be exercised in making any blanket statements or policies regarding fence material or design. Fences of an appropriate material and design can indeed make for good neighbors.