

**Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Final Review Sheet**

HDC-2023-00029

Address: 246 N. 11th Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Dulce Rodriguez, owner

Proposal: Replace vinyl fence with wood fence (violation correction)

Building Description:

This 2½-story brick end-of-row house, ca 1890, is Eastlake in style. The gable roof has 2 dormers, a bracketed cornice, asphalt shingles and a double chimney. The windows are 2/2 sash with Eastlake incised. lintels and there are 2 basement windows visible on the front façade and 3 basement windows on the side façade. The main entry is a double door with a transom and a concrete stoop with pipe railing. There is a cinder block garage in rear of the property.

Project Description:

On May 12, 2023, staff issued a notice of violation for the installation of a vinyl fence where a historic wrought iron and wood privacy fence were previously located. In speaking with the property owner, staff learned that the historic wrought iron fence was stolen at some point in the past. To address the violation, the owner is proposing to remove the vinyl fence and install a 6-foot tall wood privacy fence.



Front and side façades of 246 N. 11th Street, 2019.
(Google StreetView)



Detail of wrought iron and wood fencing, 2014.
(Google StreetView)



**Proposed wood fence to replace vinyl fence.
(Applicant)**



**Vinyl fence installed without permits.
(HARB files)**

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.12 – Fences & Streetscape Features

3.12.2 Replace historic fences in kind if repair is not feasible. New fences should match the original as closely as possible in materials, profile, appearance, and height. The proportion of fence components relative to each other and the transparency of the fence should be replicated. Avoid reducing the visibility of a historic building through the fence or infilling sections with opaque materials.

3.12.3 If in-kind replacement is not possible, alternative replacement designs and materials may be acceptable. Alternatives should match the original in size, profile, transparency, and exterior finish as closely as possible.

3.12.4 For new fences at primary or highly visible facades, select designs that complement the architectural style of the building. Appropriate fence types include picket, capped picket, and spindle. Spindle fences may be wood or metal (wrought iron is the most historically appropriate metal; steel or painted aluminum may be considered as well). Ornate metal balusters with twists, scrollwork, or cast iron details are only appropriate if such designs are original to the building. Simple and discreet designs are preferred when the original fence appearance is unknown.

3.12.5 For new privacy fences or screening for mechanical equipment, select simple designs that respect the primacy of the historic building. Allow for transparency whenever possible and minimize the amount of opaque areas. Appropriate fence types include capped flat board, lattice, and flat board with lattice panels. Wood is the most appropriate material.

3.12.6 Avoid chain-link fences, PVC (vinyl or plastic) fences, split-rail or ranch-rail fences, shaped metal rod fences from modern stock profiles, or similar non-historic alternate materials and styles.

Historical Architectural Review Board COA Final Review Sheet

3.12.7 Match the height of new fences to the height of nearby fences. Primary façade fences should be low and should not obscure the view of the building. Avoid excessive height that negatively impacts the pedestrian experience on the sidewalk and is out of proportion with the rest of the neighborhood.

3.12.8 For non-original or previously-altered fences, consider restoring the original fence appearance (if documented) or replacement with a simple appropriate design. In-kind replacement of non-historic vinyl fences is not encouraged.

Observations & Comments:

The previously installed wood privacy fence had been in place behind the historic wrought iron fence for approximately ten years. The 2014 photo shows both fences, and staff notes that a large section of the wrought iron fencing was missing at that time. While the design guidelines advocate for in-kind replacement of historic fences, they also allow for wood shadow box or picket fences, provided primary or highly visible facades are not obscured. In this case, the fence encloses a side yard and does not significantly impact the building's facades. Staff finds the proposed wood privacy fence to be acceptable, provided it is painted, since much of the historic wrought iron fence has been missing for approximately ten years.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval, provided the fence is painted and with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.12 Fences & Streetscape Features.

HARB Discussion:

The HARB recommended following the guidelines as closely as possible and suggested changing the vinyl fence to either a picket fence or shadow box fence. The HARB discussed the proposed wood stockade fence and agreed it would be acceptable with the pointed ends either placed in the ground or squared off at the top. The HARB agreed that the fence should be painted to meet the guidelines.

Action:

Mr. Lichtenwalner moved to approve the application presented on 7/10/2023 for the installation of a wood fence at 246 N. 11th Street, with the staff to review details, provided the fence is painted and top is squared off, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.12 Fences & Streetscape Features. Mr. Encelewski seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.