

City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

memo

DATE: August 12, 2025

TO: Historic Districts Review Board Members

VIA: Heather Lamboy, Planning and Land Use Department Director #LL
Maggie Moore, Assistant Land Use Director
Gary Moquino, Historic Preservation Division Manager *GM*

FROM: Amanda Romero, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Division

2025-010698-HDRB, 222 Polaco St., Westside-Guadalupe Historic District, Gayla Bechtol, agent for Lee Kirch, owner, requests to install to a coyote fence to a height of 6'-0" where the maximum allowable is 4'-7". Exception is requested to 14-5.2(D)(9)(a)(ii)(B) (Heather Lamboy)

REFERENCE ATTACHMENTS (Sequentially):

CITY SUBMITTALS

District Standards & yard wall
& fence standards.

Historic Inventory Form

Zoning Review Sheet

Other: Height Calculation

APPLICANT SUBMITTALS

Proposal Letter

Site Plan/Floor Plan

Elevations

Photographs

Other:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as it complies with 14-5.2(D) General Design Standards for all Historic Districts, and 14-5.2(I) Westside-Guadalupe Design Standards.

Sample motion:

- a. Approve or deny Case #2025-010698 to permit the proposed 4’-7” adobe wall, a 5’-0” arched pedestrian gate with wood panels with arch on a steel frame and a 4’-7” vehicular gate with a steel frame with wood panels at 222 Polaco Street.

BACKGROUND & SUMMARY:

On July 22, 2025, the Historic District Review Board heard case #2025-010698, and postponed the case to date a certain, with the condition that the applicant return with new a design.

The single-family residence at 222 Polaco Street is listed as contributing to the Westside-Guadalupe Historic District. The previous cedar fence is visible in the photographs on the Historic Cultural Property Inventory Form, completed in 1998, and the Building Inventory Form, completed in 1985.

This case is the result of a red tag issued by the Historic Districts Construction Inspector. The applicant had removed the cedar plank fence and was erecting a 6-foot coyote fence.

The overall character of the Polaco streetscape is very similar to what can be found throughout the Westside-Guadalupe Historic District. The streetscape includes a variety of lower yard walls as well as a historically low yard wall that was increased in height, yet still consistent with the permitted streetscape height of 55”.

There have been no previous HDRB cases or administrative approvals for 222 Polaco St.

APPLICANT’S REQUEST:

The applicant proposes the following exterior alterations:

- 1) To construct an adobe wall to the height of 4’-7” where the maximum allowable height is 4’-7”, 5’-0” arch pedestrian gate wood panels on a steel frame and a 4’-7” vehicular gate with steel frame and wood panels.

RELEVANT CODE CITATIONS:

14-5.2 HISTORIC DISTRICTS

(A) General Provisions

- (1) General Purpose

In order to promote the economic, cultural, and general welfare of the people of the *city* and to ensure the harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and *development* of the *city*, it is deemed essential by the *governing body* that the qualities relating to the history of Santa Fe, and a harmonious outward appearance, which preserve *property* values and attract tourists and residents alike, be preserved, some of these qualities being:

- (a) The continued existence and *preservation* of historical areas and *buildings*;
- (b) The continued construction of *buildings* in the historic styles; and
- (c) A general harmony as to style, form, color, height, proportion, texture and material between *buildings* of historic design and those of more modern design.

(D) General Design Standards for All H Districts

In any review of proposed additions or alterations to *structures* that have been declared significant or contributing in any historic district or a *landmark* in any part of the *city*, the following standards shall be met:

(9) Height, Pitch, Scale, Massing and Floor Stepbacks

The height, pitch, *scale*, and massing of any *structure* in an historic district, as defined in this section, shall be limited as provided for in this section, unless further restricted within this chapter.

(a) Applicability

The following sections identify specific areas and specific *projects* subject to this section. Planning and land use department staff shall determine whether or not properties are included within this section. (Ord. No. 2007-45 § 30; Ord. #2020-22, § 16)

- F. When the proposed *building*, *yardwall*, or fence is located in a *streetscape* that includes no *buildings*, *yardwalls*, or fences, the height of the proposed *building* shall not exceed sixteen (16) feet. *Yardwalls* and fences in this *streetscape* shall not exceed five (5) feet in height.

(c) Height

- (ii) In exercising its authority under this section, the board shall limit the height of *structures* as set forth in this section. Heights of existing *structures* shall be as set forth on the official map of *building* heights in the historic districts.
 - A. If a proposed *building* has a parapet, the façade shall not be in excess of two (2) feet of the average of the height of the façades in the *streetscape*.
 - B. If the proposed *building* has a pitched roof, the ridge height of the proposed *building* shall not be in excess of two (2) feet of the average of the ridge height of the pitched roofs in the *streetscape*.

- C. *Yardwalls* and fences shall be limited to a height that does not exceed the average of the height of other *yardwalls* and fences in the *streetscape*.
- D. Pursuant to Section 14-7.4(C), the height of any other *structure* shall be limited to the allowable *building* height within the applicable *streetscape*, as defined in this section. (Ord. No. 2002-37 § 26)
- E. The height and dimension of signage are as set forth in Section 14-8.10(H).
- F. The board may increase the allowable height for proposed *buildings* and additions located on a sloping site where the difference in the natural *grade* along the *structure's* foundation exceeds two (2) feet. In no case shall the height of a façade exceed four (4) feet above the allowable height of the applicable *streetscape* measured from natural or finished *grade*, whichever is more restrictive. This increase in height shall be constructed only in the form of *building* *stepbacks* from the *street*.

(I) Westside-Guadalupe Historic District

(1) District Standards

Compliance with the following structural standards shall occur whenever those exterior features of *buildings* and other *structures* subject to public view from any public *street*, way, or other public place are erected, altered, or demolished:

- (a) Slump block, stucco, brick, or stone shall be used as exterior *wall* materials. Wood and other materials may be used for details. Aluminum siding, metal panels, mirrored glass, and unstuccoed concrete block or unstuccoed concrete shall not be used as exterior *wall* materials;
- (b) The color of stuccoed *buildings* shall predominantly be in browns, tans, local earth tones and soft pastels. Surfaces of stone or brick shall be in the natural color. Entryways, and *portales* or *porches* may be emphasized by the use of white or other colors. Painting of *buildings* with a color that causes arresting or spectacular effects or with bold repetitive patterns or using *buildings* as signs is prohibited. Murals, however, are permitted and may be referred to the *city* arts board for an advisory recommendation;
- (c) Roof form, *slope*, and shape. It is intended that *buildings* be designed to be "wall dominated". "Wall dominated" means that the *building's* geometry is more defined by *walls* than by roofs. *Buildings* with flat, gabled, shed, or *hipped roofs* can be designed as "wall dominated" solutions and are allowed. The height of the roof above the *wall* shall be no greater than the height of the *wall*. Folded plate, hyperbolic or mansard roofs are not allowed;
- (d) The use of solar and other energy collecting and conserving strategies is encouraged. The use of large glazed areas on south facing *walls* for trombe *walls* or other solar collectors, direct gain, or other energy collecting purposes is allowed.

When in view from any public *street*, way, or other public place, solar equipment shall be screened as follows:

- (i) raising the parapet;
- (ii) setting back from the edge of the roof;
- (iii) framing the collector with wood;
- (iv) in the case of pitched roofs, by integrating the collector into the pitch;
- (v) in the case of ground solar collectors by a *wall* or vegetation;
- (vi) in the case of *wall* collectors, by enclosing by end or other *walls*;
- (vii) other means that screen the collector or integrate it into the overall *structure*.
Non-glare materials shall be used in solar collectors.

- (e) Mechanical, electrical, telephone equipment, microwave satellite receiving dishes, and other obtrusive equipment shall be architecturally screened with opaque materials by raising the parapet, boxing in the equipment, or other appropriate means. The equipment shall be of a low profile to minimize the *screening* problems;
- (f) *Walls* and fences shall be of brick, *adobe*, masonry, rock, wood, coyote fencing, or similar materials. Wrought iron fences and slump block *walls* are allowed. *Walls* of unstuccoed concrete block, unstuccoed concrete, chain-link, metal wire, or similar materials are prohibited, except where the *wall* or fence is not in the *street* frontage;
- (g) *Greenhouses*
- (h) Attached *greenhouses* that front on the *street* shall give the appearance of being integrated into the *structure* of the *building* or of being a substantive addition rather than having a lean-to effect. The use of corrugated fiberglass or rolled plastic for the external surface of attached or freestanding *greenhouses* that front on the *street* is prohibited. *Greenhouses* with slanting sides shall be bracketed at the ends and that *greenhouses* made from enclosed *porches* or *portales* maintain the shape of the *porch* or *portal*;
- (i) *Porches* and *portales* are encouraged;
- (j) When parking spaces are required for commercial or multi-family *residential buildings*, they shall be placed to the rear or side of the building.

(2) Walls; Fences; Solar Collectors; Administration

Applications for erection, alteration, or demolition of *walls*, fences, and solar collectors and required submittals shall be reviewed by the planning and land use department. Approval, disapproval or referral shall be indicated by the division on the *application* for the building *permit* and on each of the required submittals, all of which shall be signed by the division staff assigned to the review. The division shall report approvals, disapprovals, and referrals to the board at its next regular meeting as an informational item. (Ord. No. 2007-45 § 30; Ord. #2020-22, § 16)

WALL AND FENCE GUIDELINES

SANTA FE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

[ADOPTED 24 AUGUST 1999]

Purpose and intent: These guidelines are offered to promote continuity and harmony of design elements that comprise streetscape in the Santa Fe Historic Districts, including, but not limited to walls, fences, open space and landscaping and their connectivity to the primary structure(s) on the property and the physical character of the street or public facade of the property. These guidelines are consistent with the purpose and intent, and standards in the Historic Districts Ordinance [Section 14-70 SFCC 1987].

SCALE:

Walls should not extend for more than 50 feet in a single, horizontal plane without a plane change of at least one foot.

Wall heights should modulate a minimum of 8 inches, or one block course, at least every 25'.

Walls should include openings such as gates, windows and nichos at appropriate intervals.

Walls and fences in excess of 4 feet in height and having street frontage or visibility shall be brought to the HDRB for review and approval prior to submission for building permit review. Where there is a conflict between this guideline and the allowable height as calculated under Section 14-70.20 SFCC 1987, the latter shall prevail. [This supersedes the HDRB's 8/13/96 policy requiring the same for walls or fences in excess of 3 feet in height. It encourages the construction of lower privacy walls that still allow the structure on the site to make a contribution to the streetscape, and provide for a view shed into the property. This is recommended in response to the proliferation of inappropriately high yard walls that have been and are being constructed throughout the city's historic districts, causing an impact on the historic and visual character of the historic districts.]

Wall heights should be carefully regulated by the HDRB standards as calculable for the particular streetscapes [Section 14-70.20 SFCC 1987]; and should be restricted so as not to increase the allowable height for the streetscape by more than 20%.

Solid fences should be stepped back and modulated the same as walls.

Fences with fenestration, such as coyote fences, may continue in an unrestricted horizontal distance at the same height and in the same horizontal plane.

SETBACK:

Unfenestrated walls and fences (e.g. cedar stake, ponderosa slat) should setback from the front property line an average of 1 foot for every 10 feet of horizontal length of the wall. This could be accomplished in a single plane or with step backs as outlined above.

Open fences (e.g. wire and post, picket) or fenestrated fences (e.g. coyote) may be constructed without setback at the front property line, unless otherwise regulated by the underlying zoning.

Walls with openings comprising 20% of the surface area of a single plane may be constructed at the property line, unless restricted by the underlying zoning.

Side or rear walls or fences may be constructed at the property line as per that allowed by the underlying zoning.

Walls or fences within existing compounds should be restricted to privacy barriers to enclose courtyards, parking and private areas; and should be connected to and not extend more than 25 feet from the main structure. However, walls or fences should not be connected to significant structures. Desired connections may be made to significant structures by way of other means [e.g. Landscaping]. These treatments will help maintain traditional compound common elements, such as open space and the ability to communicate with neighbors, and therefore assist in the preservation of the character of existing compounds.

MATERIAL, TEXTURE AND COLOR:

Walls should be predominantly of the same material, texture and color as the main structure(s) to be located on the property, or may be of material indigenous or traditional for the area such as river rock, limestone, flagstone or slate.

Fences should be of the material, texture and color of fences typical of the existing streetscape or design vernacular if applicable to a particular H-District or streetscape.

GATES:

Vehicular gates should be permitted only at entrances to private driveways or compounds and set back in accordance with the underlying zoning.

Vehicular gating of subdivisions or other large-scale developments is strongly discouraged, and may be prohibited [See City of Santa Fe 1999 General Plan].

Gates should be designed to complement the wall or fence treatment containing them with respect to scale, height, material, texture and color. Fenestrated gates should be encouraged as opposed to solid gates.

LANDSCAPING (Suggested Options)

Walls and fences in excess of 50' in length should install landscaping along the exterior facade within the suggested setback or step back.

Landscaping on top of or over a wall is encouraged to provide for additional screening if desired from the interior of the property.

Terracing of walls is encouraged and should be landscaped.

The use of native, drought resistant plant material is encouraged in all wall, fence or terrace landscaping.