

# H.1 Landscaping

## **Trees and shrubbery**

The retention and care of existing trees and shrubbery, and the installation of new plants, is encouraged in the preservation districts.

If new plants are proposed, their species and locations should be consistent with other trees on the property and in the neighborhood. For example, new trees along East Avenue should be consistent with the broad lawns and large beech trees already there. Questions of consistency include:

- Whether most trees are deciduous or coniferous;
- Whether front lawns are mostly treed or treeless;
- Whether trees form a consistent pattern along a street (the city forester controls all trees in the strip between the sidewalk and the street);
- Whether a tree, when fully grown, will overwhelm the space it occupies, place other plants trees in shade, or obscure an historic building.

Trees or shrubs that typically grow high and/or wide should not be planted close to historic buildings. Roots and branches can damage any building, and harmful moisture can be trapped along a building's walls. Leaves can clog gutters and downspouts, causing rainwater to migrate into building roofs and walls.

Where trees and plants are required for landscaping and screening, each species must comply with the City's Approved Plant Material List per the zoning code.

## Tree removal and replacement

Removal of any tree with a trunk over 6" in diameter, measured 4 feet above the ground, requires a C of A. Removal of a mature tree thought to be diseased requires written certification of the tree's condition by a licensed arborist.

Although the Preservation Board does not review projects where a building or landscape component is replaced 'in kind', i.e. with a matching component, the Board prefers to review the replacement of trees. Some existing trees are in inappropriate locations or are of an inappropriate species, and replacing them in kind, especially with a young tree, may not be the best solution.

## Hedges

Hedges are common features in the city's preservation districts; most define the edges of yards or walkways. Hedges should be located so that, at maturity, they will not constrict walkways or crowd buildings, walls and fences. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for a hedge that, when mature, is intended to be taller than 4 feet.

## H.2 Landscaping continued

The Preservation Board does review changes to landscaping in preservation districts or at individual landmark properties.

### **A Certificate of Appropriateness is not required for:**

- Gardens and flower beds
- Shrubs, including hedges, that are under 4' tall at maturity
- Vines and ivy growing on buildings, though this is discouraged because the tendrils can enlarge cracks in walls, and the leaves can trap harmful moisture against the building walls.
- Small-scale elements such as benches, statuary, fountains, sundials, urns.
- Small house-number signs on the front lawn
- Low-voltage and solar-powered landscape lighting, often used to illuminate walkways, walls and building entries. A C of A is required for high-intensity illumination of a building, usually appropriate only for architecturally-significant commercial and public buildings.
- Objects in the public right-of-way, such as sidewalk benches, bus stop shelters and newspaper boxes, are not governed by the Preservation Board.

### **A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for:**

- Lighting fixtures in yards and parking lots, which should be placed to minimize glare and light spillage onto neighboring properties, as governed by the zoning code. Building-mounted fixtures are usually preferable to pole-mounted fixtures, although the placement of fixtures on buildings should avoid covering or damaging architectural features.
- Sign lighting, which must be reviewed as a condition of the sign permit. Appropriate fixtures should be as small as possible, and should not direct light onto neighboring properties. It is not always aesthetically desirable to plant shrubs to conceal the fixtures.
- Land contouring with a grade change over 3 feet in height or depth, such as a berm, terrace or pond.
- Raised planting beds, which are inappropriate in front yards, especially if edged with railroad ties, "landscape timbers", concrete blocks, precast concrete edging blocks or loose-laid stone or masonry.
- Arbors, trellises and pergolas, which are appropriate in rear or side yards, and occasionally in front yards. Follow the fence guidelines for appropriate materials.

- Patios of stone, brick or concrete pavers, which are appropriate in historic districts. Poured concrete slabs are typically inappropriate. Follow the guidelines for pavement.
- In-ground pools, which are appropriate in some rear yards. Related guidelines include those for fences and walls, and for decks.
- Hot tubs, which are allowed in rear yards and which are governed by the guidelines for decks.
- Plastic ponds
- Utility sheds, gazebos and sculptures covering a ground area over 25 square feet.
- Play equipment such as climbers and sandboxes covering a ground area over 200 square feet.
- Landscape boulders, which are inappropriate in most areas.

## H.3 Landscaping continued

### Fences and Walls

The zoning code governs the heights and surfaces of fences and walls. The Monroe County Department of Transportation may restrict fences and walls near street corners.

#### Fences

Fences in rear and side yards are usually appropriate, and are most often closed or solid to provide privacy and/or to hide parking. In front yards along streets with few front yard fences, a new fence may be inappropriate if it interrupts the openness of the series of yards. For example, a fence in a front yard on East Avenue would seem out of place in this continually open landscape. If a front yard fence is desired, it should be open in design so as to optimize views. Wrought or cast iron fences are most commonly used for this purpose. Zoning regulations control the heights of fences, and the county department of transportation has influence over fences at street corners.

A property owner wishing to install a fence should examine the neighborhood to see whether a greater context should influence decisions. For example, if no other fences exist in front yards, the owner may not want to propose one.

#### Materials

When choosing a material, consideration should be given to the style of the building. In general, wood fences and stone walls are appropriate with wood houses, while masonry walls are more appropriate to masonry and stucco buildings.

Appropriate fence materials include wood, wrought iron and cast iron. Chain link and pressure treated wood fences are appropriate only where they are largely invisible. Vinyl (or PVC) and aluminum fences can be appropriate, provided that they pass the "arm's length" test. That is, they must appear indistinguishable from wood or iron fencing at arm's length. Generally, fences that pass the test have the following features:

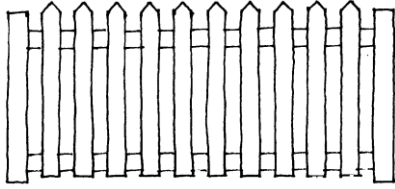
- concealed connecting brackets and/or rivets between parts,
- post caps that appear to be part of the post, rather than snapped on top,
- a low-sheen finish rather than a high gloss.

#### Screening of trash bins and Dumpsters

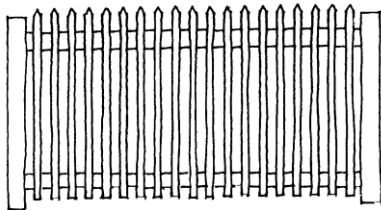
Screening is required by the zoning code. Appropriate screening in preservation districts is wood fence material, at least as high as the bin, tote or Dumpster. As with fences, stockade-style wood screening is not preferred. Screens and gates should be durable to withstand heavy use.

## H.4 Landscaping continued

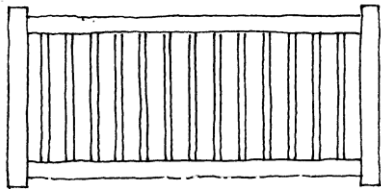
### Fences continued



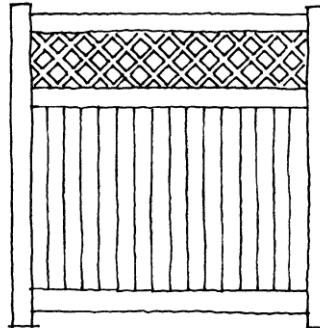
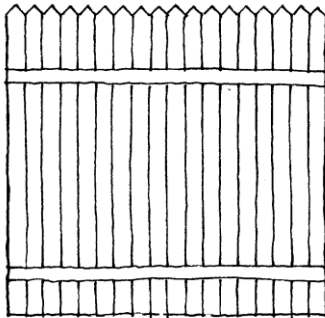
Appropriate fence styles include the two upper drawings, where the pickets are attached on one side of horizontal rails. The fence in the third drawing, where the pickets run between the rails, is less common. For all three styles, the posts are usually 4 inch (nominal) square, and may be topped with a sloped cap or decorative finial or ball. These are all lower fences, about three feet high.



The four fences at the bottom of the page are all higher, up to six feet tall. The sections are usually 6 or 8 feet long. The posts are usually 4 or 6 inch square, and may be topped with a sloped cap or decorative finial or ball. All are "closed" fences, appropriate in rear and side yards and around trash areas. They are not allowed in front yards.

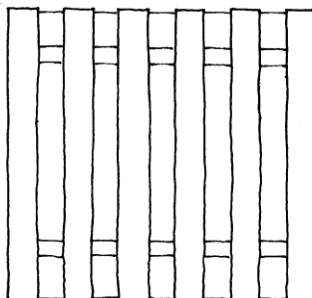
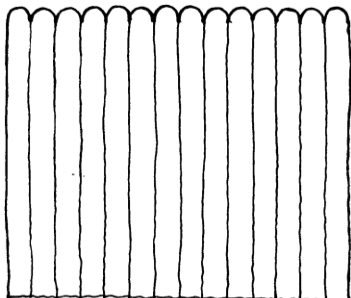


In all cases, the zoning code says that the "good" or finished side of a fence must face outward, toward adjacent property. Rails and braces should be on the inside.



The stockade style on the left is informal, appropriate in concealed areas. Usually made of cedar, these are unfinished and tend to become rather rustic.

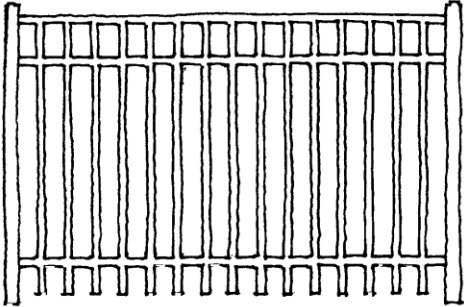
The lattice style on the right is very formal, and is appropriate most anywhere.



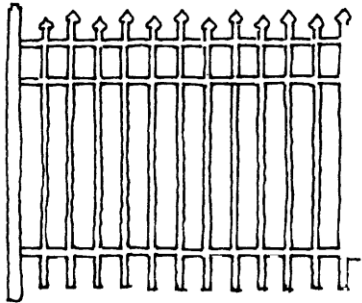
The dog-ear style on the left is common, usually made of 6 inch boards. The board-on-board type on the right looks the same on both sides. Both styles are appropriate in scallop form, where the top of each fence section, between posts, is arched.

## H.5 Landscaping continued

### Fences continued

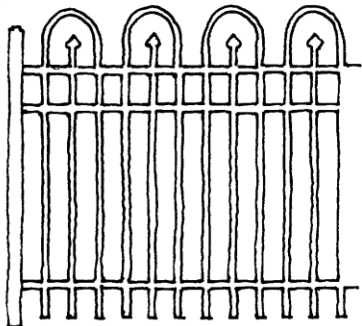


Cast or wrought iron fences are traditional in preservation districts. Because of their open design, they are appropriate in front and side yards where visibility is desired. The fences come in many styles, although the basic components of pickets and rails are commonly one inch square iron.



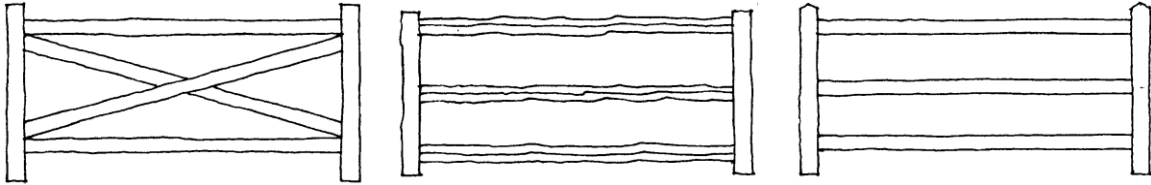
Aluminum fences are not traditional, but some manage to look enough like the real thing to be appropriate. To be used, however, an aluminum fence must pass the "arm's length" test. That is, it must appear indistinguishable from an iron fence at arm's length. Generally, fences that pass the test have the following features:

- Concealed connecting brackets between parts, and no visible rivets.
- Post caps that appear to be part of the post, rather than snapped on top.
- A low-sheen finish rather than a high gloss. To date, few aluminum fences meet this challenge.



## H.6 Landscaping continued

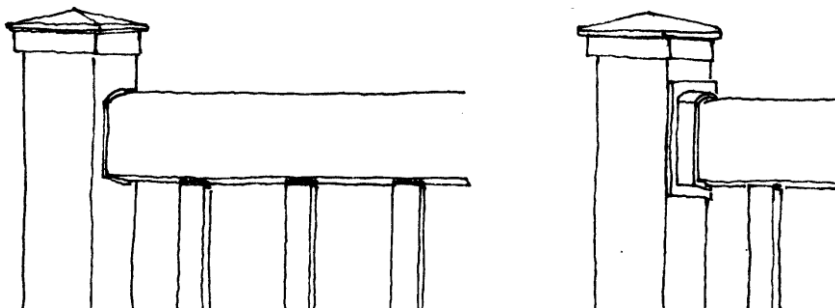
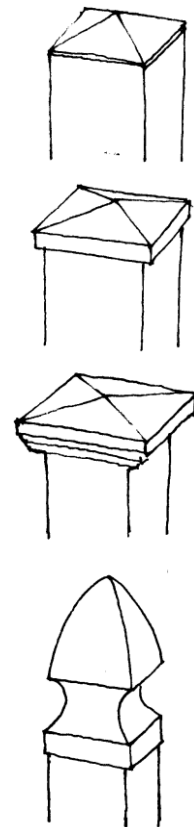
### Fences continued



Any ranch style fence, including the cross buck, split rail and simple rail styles shown here, is inappropriate in a preservation district.

Vinyl fences are clearly not traditional, but some manage to look enough like the real thing to be appropriate in the districts. To be used, however, a vinyl fence must pass the "arm's length" test. That is, it must appear indistinguishable from a wood or iron fence at arm's length. Generally, fences that pass the test have the following features:

- Concealed connecting brackets between parts, like the fence on the left below, not like that on the right.
- Post caps that appear to be part of the post, rather than snapped on top. Of the four caps shown to the right, the first and third are acceptable, while the second and fourth are not.
- A low-sheen finish rather than a high gloss. To date, few vinyl fences meet this challenge.



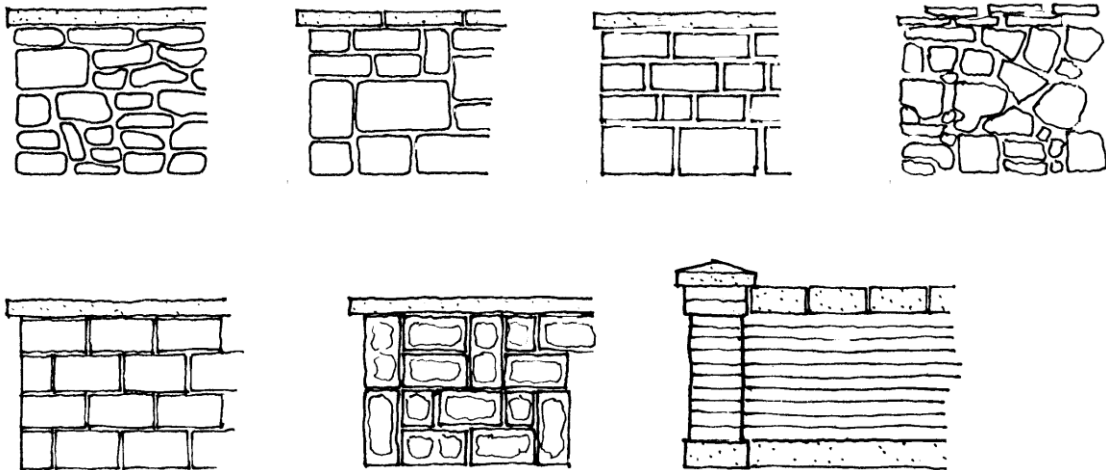
## H.7 Landscaping continued

### Walls

Masonry and stone walls are appropriate in the preservation districts. In most rear and side yards, formal (that is, stacked and mortared versus loose-laid) brick and stone walls are historically appropriate. Informal loose-laid rubble walls are common in rural settings, but typically inappropriate in our preservation districts. Loose-laid stone or brick edging around planting beds is not appropriate in front yards, but is permissible in side and rear yards.

Concrete block is not appropriate for walls in historic areas unless the block is coated with stucco. Decorative concrete block, which was common in the 1920s-30s, is appropriate. However, modern precast concrete retaining wall systems are typically inappropriate for walls or as edging for planting beds in front yards.

To prevent cracking of mortar joints and blocks, all masonry walls should have footings installed below the frost line. An impervious coping or cap should top any such wall.



Top row left to right:

- A. Coursed rubble random bond
- B. Random coursed ashlar
- C. Coursed stone
- D. Rustic rubble

Bottom row left to right:

- A. Concrete block
- B. Decorative concrete block
- C. Brick with brick pier



## H.8 Pavement

Nothing more than the minimum required pavement is preferred in preservation districts. The "lot coverage" provisions of the zoning code restrict the amount of a lot that can be covered with pavement, buildings and structures, and aesthetic considerations by the Preservation Board may further limit the amount of pavement.

Parking lots should be screened as best possible from neighboring properties by fences or tall planting. See the guidelines for Fences and Walls and for Landscaping for appropriate designs and materials. Parking lots should be striped to keep parked vehicles orderly; wheel stops and raised edging should be considered to keep vehicles from damaging fences and plants.

Driveways should be as narrow as possible. Two-way traffic may not be possible if the Board restricts the driveway width, so a property owner should consider how vehicles avoid conflict on ingress and egress.

Provisions should be made for the storage or removal of snow from parking lots and drives, and consideration should be given to the potential impacts of snowplows and snow banks on fences, planting, buildings, etc. Protective devices such as bollards or raised planting beds are to be reviewed by the Board.

Appropriate paving materials include asphalt, concrete, stamped asphalt, stamped concrete, resin (petroleum-free) pavement, brick, Belgian block, paving stones, cobblestones and pea gravel. Loose gravel and crushed stones are not preferred. Stone such as slate and limestone are not recommended for driving surfaces, as vehicle weights will cause the stones to crack. Grass-filled pavers are not preferred, because they shift in freeze-thaw cycles and the grass often doesn't grow as advertised. Reinforced turf systems, which utilize some form of plastic sheeting or grid beneath a grass surface, are used effectively where heavy vehicles occasionally travel over a lawn.

Paths, walkways and patios are appropriate in the preservation districts. Appropriate materials include flagstone and fieldstone, along with the materials noted above.

Impervious pavement, such as asphalt and concrete, should direct water away from building foundations.

Appropriate curbing materials include concrete, granite and Belgian block.