

# OREGON CITY HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD POLICIES

## HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD POLICY #6: Fences and Walls *A Guide for Property Owners*



### ABOUT THE HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD POLICIES

The City has adopted protections for locally designated properties to ensure these historic buildings maintain their integrity.

The Historic Review Board (HRB) adopted policies for minor alterations to historic structures that can be done without formal Board review. The policies are meant to provide clear direction to historic property owners on exterior changes including but not limited to roofing, siding, windows and doors. HRB Policies were first adopted in 1986 and updated in 2019.

Locally designated properties are subject to HRB Policies. This includes designated structures in McLoughlin Conservation District, all structures in Canemah National Register District, and landmarks outside of districts. To see if a property is designated, visit [www.orcity.org/maps/historic-resources](http://www.orcity.org/maps/historic-resources).

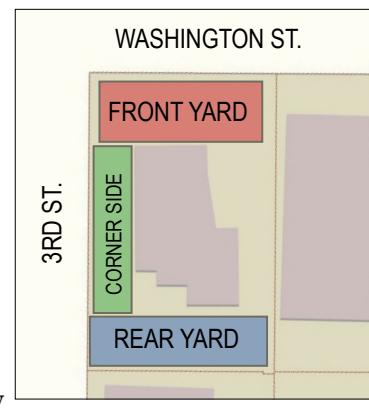
### HRB POLICY #7: FENCES AND WALLS

The HRB advises property owners that fences and walls are an extension of the architecture of the house. According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, additions such as fences "should be compatible with the size, scale, material and character of the property, neighborhood or environment."

Fences in the front yard are typically more open and decorative, while fences in the side and rear yards are more utilitarian.

Front yard fences or walls and corner side yard fences or walls shall be no more than 42 inches in height and shall not create a traffic sight obstruction (as defined in Chapter 10.32 of the Oregon City Municipal Code). Along rear yards and interior side yards (beyond the front building line of the structure), fences or walls may be up to six (6) feet in height. Fences or walls on vacant properties may utilize materials that are in the "ACCEPTABLE" category in front and corner side yards; HRB review is required if rear yard fence types are desired in front/corner side yards.

Staff may approve fences or walls that are listed in the "ACCEPTABLE" category through an



administrative review. Fences or walls that are not listed, or that are specifically listed under the “NOT ACCEPTABLE” category shall be submitted for review and decision by the HRB. Fences or walls that are made of “not acceptable” materials may be utilized if fully obscured. Pressure-treated wood may only be used for fence posts and not for any other portions of the fence, and shall be non-incised.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

This means a few things as a property owner with a designated historic property:

- If the fence is listed in the “acceptable” category, the review is an administrative review at the staff level and does not require an additional permit for this review or any additional fee.
- If the fence is listed in the “not acceptable” category, then it must be referred or submitted to the HRB for review and decision, which will require a fee of \$50.
- If building a retaining wall, contact the building department to verify if a building permit is required.

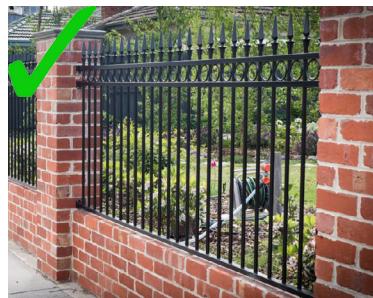
## ACCEPTABLE FENCE AND WALL TYPES IN FRONT AND CORNER SIDE YARDS

DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
<b>Wood Picket:</b> Wood fence with vertical pickets spaced at least one inch apart to six inches apart. Pickets may be pointed or straight, and boards may be flat or square. Includes traditional white painted (preferred); unpainted or different color paint is also acceptable. May be scalloped or straight on top, or topped with a railing.	
<b>Iron Picket:</b> Includes wrought iron picket fences with simple or ornate designs	
<b>Ornamental Cast Iron:</b> Cast iron fences and gates with ornamentation or detailed designs	
<b>Brick:</b> Includes bricks of any color or size. Allowed in combination with other masonry types	

**Basalt Stone:** Basalt Stone was quarried locally in Oregon City's past. Basalt stone may be mortared or stacked. Basalt Veneer is typically mortared. This does not include manufactured stone veneer products. May be topped with bricks.



**Combinations of Iron and Masonry:** Brick, stone, or cast-in-place concrete with iron fencing atop or integrated into the wall



**Woven Wire:** Decorative woven wire with loop top design and with wood posts and rails



**Cast-in-place Concrete:** Poured concrete wall with smooth or textured finishing



**Steel or Aluminum Rail:** Permitted only on non-residential properties (e.g. commercial buildings, schools, religious institutions)



### Solid Wood Board (Un-spaced Picket):

Vertical wood boards without spaces between boards. May be scalloped or straight on top, or topped with a railing.



## NOT ACCEPTABLE FENCE AND WALL TYPES IN FRONT AND CORNER SIDE YARDS

### DESCRIPTION

### EXAMPLE

**Chain-link:** Consists of steel wire woven to form a diamond-shaped mesh. Includes uncoated, powder coated, and with or without slats. Also includes chain-link hedge slats.



**Post and Rail / Split Rail:** Also known as a log fence, zigzag fence, worm fence or snake fence, made out of timber logs, usually split lengthwise into rails. Uses two to four rails and is divided into sections with wood posts.



**Concrete Block:** Includes pre-cast panels, CMU, hollow or solid blocks. Both split faced and smooth.



**Chicken Wire:** Unframed fence of thin, flexible metal wire with varied pattern including hexagonal or rectangular shapes. Known as chicken wire, hog wire, or welded wire. May include repeating wood or metal posts.



**Solid Wood Board or Stockade:** Wood fence with vertical or horizontal boards and no spacing. Includes good neighbor fence and stockade fence. May be topped with square lattice or other wood design. May have a scalloped or straight top. Not allowed when obstructing view of historic structure.



**Vinyl/ Plywood / Hardboard or Asbestos Panel:** Plastic, vinyl, fiber cement or asbestos panels. Includes solid fences/walls or those designed to look like wood picket fences.



## ACCEPTABLE FENCE AND WALL TYPES IN ALLEYS, REAR AND INTERIOR SIDE YARDS

### DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE

All fence and wall types that are acceptable in front yards and side yards listed on pages 2-4 are acceptable in alleys, rear, and interior side yards.

**Horizontal Board:** Wood fence with at least five horizontal boards. Boards may be spaced or have no spacing. May be topped with square lattice or other wood design.



**Solid Wood Board or Stockade:** Wood fence with vertical or horizontal boards and no spacing. Includes good neighbor fence and stockade fence. May be topped with square lattice or other wood design. May have a scalloped or straight top.



**Wood Lattice:** Square vertical/horizontal pattern of wood panels with spacing.



**Gabion Wall:** Consists of rocks or stones enclosed in a metal wire basket



**Goat Fence:** Welded wire fence with frame of wood around each panel. Known as wire trellis fence, goat fence or livestock fencing.



**Non-basalt stone:** May include sandstone, limestone, lavarock, or other rock that would not have been quarried within the Pacific Northwest and used in the historic era



**Recycled Concrete:** Irregularly sized concrete pieces or chunks stacked like stones.



## NOT ACCEPTABLE FENCE AND WALL TYPES IN INTERIOR AND SIDE YARDS

All that are not acceptable in front yard, unless explicitly listed as acceptable in interior side yards, alleyways, and rear yards.

Further information about the HRB and HRB Policies can be found at:  
[www.orcity.org/planning/hrb-policies](http://www.orcity.org/planning/hrb-policies)

If you have any questions about the City's Preservation Program or if your property is locally designated, please contact:  
Oregon City Preservation Program  
Phone: 503-722-3789  
[ocplanning@orcity.org](mailto:ocplanning@orcity.org)

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