

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 structures(s) on the property and the physical character of the street or public façade 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 façade 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.