

FENCES

HUNTINGTON WOODS HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION Guidelines for Historic Districts and Designated Historic Properties

I. Definitions: For purposes of these guidelines, fences mean any structure, not integral to any building, used as a barrier to define boundaries, screen off, or enclose a portion of a property.

II. Policy

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings recommend against:

"Introducing any new building, streetscape or landscape feature that is out of scale or otherwise inappropriate to the setting's historic character."

"Introducing a new landscape feature or plant material that is visually incompatible with the site or destroys site patterns or vistas."

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings recommend:

"Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space."

Landscape features include fences, walkways, driveways, plantings, etc.

The following guidelines concerning fences are provided to assist in interpreting and applying the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

III. Guidelines

As with other alterations to the exteriors of buildings/resources within the historic district, the introduction of fencing or changes to existing fencing must be reviewed by the Commission. The introduction of fencing on a property that currently has no fencing or no historical record of fencing will be reviewed carefully, particularly where the proposed fencing will be visible from the street. The existence of other historically inconsistent fences in the area is not a basis for approval of another inconsistent fence.

For the Hill Historic District, particular attention should be paid to the original deed restrictions for Huntington Woods Subdivision.

A. *Location*

The proposed location of the fence is important. Fences placed in rear yards where visibility from the street is limited are often appropriate where the property owner seeks security or pet control.

Placement of fences in side or rear yards so that the fence is visible from the street warrants additional scrutiny for appropriateness. Heights and design of fences play an important role. Fences that impede "clear vision" at intersections or driveways sacrifice safety as well as historical appropriateness. Fences, where appropriate, should define site patterns and not impede streetscapes, vistas or panoramas. Visual setbacks provide consistency and continuity in historic neighborhoods and often reflect current zoning criteria.

Placement of fences along lot lines confirms historic lot patterns of neighborhoods, as opposed to placement along arbitrary lines. Fences placed off lot lines can create dead spaces and false alleys which detract from the continuity of vistas and streetscapes. Historical references (photos, plot plan, etc.) consistent with the period and design of the structure that indicate placement and design of fences will assist the Commission in reviewing fencing applications.

B. *Design and Materials*

Fencing proposals should be consistent in design, materials, and scale with historic fencing. Wood, iron, or other historic materials are recommended over plastic, vinyl, aluminum or other contemporary materials. Where a more ornate style of fencing can be documented as having been present at the property, that historic fencing may be replicated. In other cases, simple designs consistent with historic wrought iron fencing, wood picket fencing, or other historic types are recommended over more contemporary styles such as unfinished pressure treated lumber fencing and chain link fencing. Size and scale of the fencing will be considered closely, including distance to viewing points, viewing heights, clear vision over fencing, and other visual references.

In all cases, the Planning or Building Departments should be consulted by the applicant for other requirements.

These guidelines were approved on _____, 2004 by the

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office under the provisions of
Michigan's Local Historic District Act (1970 PA 169, Section 5.(3);
MCL 399.205)