

CITY OF GRANBURY
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Historic Preservation
DESIGN GUIDELINES

14. LANDSCAPE AND STREETScape

Commentary:

Landscaping appropriately and in context with historic buildings has often been forgotten in restoration and preservation. Yet, to be faithful to all the precepts of historic preservation, landscape is highly important to the uniqueness of a sense of place and time in Granbury.

Granbury was located in a post oak forest of the western cross timbers, evidenced by the few remaining native oaks and the red clay soil. Nearly all of the immediate forest was initially cut for shelter and firewood. When settlement was secure, native plants brought into the village for the town square were “shade trees” used to mitigate summer heat, and were deciduous and fast growing. In Granbury's case they were hackberry, later cut down leaving today's pecans. A lawn was established around the courthouse without foundation planting to define the first urban space, and the trees planted at the lawn's perimeter.

Before reinforced concrete was available, sidewalks and curbs were quarried from weathered-surface hard limestone outcroppings. The limestone was quarried in large slabs, 4-to 6-inches thick, and roughly 18-inches wide by 40-inches long. Today, these slabs are known as “Granbury Fence Rock” because of their early use on farm fences.

Before World War II, Bermuda grass was the only grass used because of its deep-root resistance to drought.

Definitions

Hardscape A term used to define hard exterior surfaces such as walks, fountains, drives and curbs.

Landscape A general term used to define all parts of the exterior environment, including vegetation, walks, drives, walls, fountains, gazebos, sculpture, etc.

Softscape The vegetative parts of the landscape, including trees, shrubs, flowers and ground covers such as grass and vines.

Street Furniture The manufactured elements introduced into the exterior environment, including benches, seats, bollards, traffic lights, street lights, freestanding signs, trash containers, news racks and plant containers of all kinds.

HISTORIC BUSINESS DISTRICTS

General Landscape Character

Landscaping, other than that in containers, shall be designed, as much as possible, using native plants and hardscape materials found in Hood and surrounding counties. To the extent possible, use plants compatible with Xeriscape water conservation principles.

Landscape Hardscape Character

The continued use of weathered local limestone for walks, curbs, and landscape hardscape within the district should be employed. Warm-tone cement compatible with Granbury's historic limestone should be used for other flat work to reinforce the visual uniqueness of the historic district.

Protection of Historic Walls from Plant Materials

A hard surface or grass is the preferred material at the immediate edge of historic structures. No shrubs, trees or plants requiring continual moist soil shall be planted within ten feet of the foundations of historic buildings in the district. Grades around buildings shall be maintained always to shed water away from the building, a minimum of 1/4-inch per foot, and preferably 1/2-inch per foot.

Landscape shall be designed so as to cause no damage to the exterior fabric of any historic structure. For example, no clinging vines shall be allowed.

Volunteer trees and plants growing in crevices must be removed to prevent them from threatening walls and foundations of historic structures.

Removal of free-standing mature trees over 6 inches in diameter in the district shall require approval by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Prohibited:

- *Landscaping with non-native plants within public view corridors.*

- *Planting shrubs, trees or plants requiring continual moisture within ten feet of historic building foundations.*

- *Allowing volunteer trees and plants to grow in wall and foundation crevices.*

- *Removing trees over 6 inches in diameter.*
- *Grades less than 1/4-inch per foot in slope.*

Plant Containers

Prohibited:

- *Exterior landscaping in the downtown courthouse square historic district without a Certificate of Appropriateness, except for plant containers designated for staff approval as outlined below.*
- *Not maintaining live plant material in a healthy and growing condition appropriate to the season of the year.*
- *No landscaping, including plant containers, can obstruct the normal flow of pedestrian traffic on sidewalks.*

Criteria for the Staff Approval of Plant Containers (does require staff review)

Plant containers may be staff approved and do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission if they meet the following criteria:

1. 1'5" - 2' in height and 1'5" - 2' in diameter.
 2. Black, Rookwood Dark Green or similar dark green color.
 3. Plantings must consist of living plant material.
 4. Must maintain a minimum 36" of sidewalk clearance.
 5. All staff approved pots must be placed so as to not interfere with pedestrian traffic along a sidewalk or storefront and must maintain a minimum 36" of sidewalk clearance.
- All plant containers to be considered in this category must receive either a Certificate of Appropriateness or staff approval prior to their placement. An applicant requesting staff approval in this category is required to submit a completed application and all supporting documentation to City Staff for review. If it is determined the application can be staff approved, the application will be signed and filed for record with the City. A copy of the signed application will be provided to the applicant for their record. (*Amended September 8, 2011*)

Merchandise Displays

Prohibited:

- *Exterior arrangements of merchandise or furniture without a Certificate of Appropriateness to be issued on a yearly basis. Each Certificate of Appropriateness, regardless of date of issuance, shall be renewed by the first of every year. This does not include street furniture that has been designated for staff approval as outline below.*

Street Furniture

The locations and styles of benches or seating shall be approved by the Historic Commission, as well as the locations and styles of newspaper racks. Benches that are designated for staff approval will not require the approval of the Historic Commission if they meet the following criteria as determined by staff:

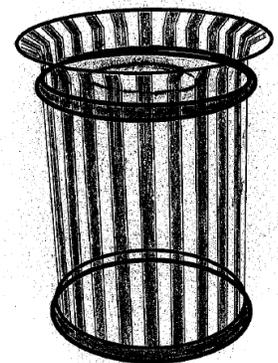
Criteria for the Staff Approval of Benches (does require staff review)

1. Maximum size of 4' height x 5' width.
 2. No more than 2 benches per storefront.
 3. All staff approved benches must be placed so as to not interfere with pedestrian traffic along a sidewalk or storefront and must maintain a minimum 36" of sidewalk clearance.
 4. Must be constructed of either metal, wood, hardie board or a combination of said materials
 5. Benches shall be black and/or dark green and wood shall be stained/sealed.
- All benches are required to receive either a Certificate of Appropriateness or staff approval prior to placement. Any location which exceeds the maximum amount of benches located along the storefront may replace an existing bench with a staff approved bench. An applicant requesting to place more than 2 benches along their storefront must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission. An applicant requesting staff approval in this category is required to submit a completed application and all supporting documentation to City Staff for review. If it is determined the application can be staff approved, the application will be signed and filed for record with the City. A copy of the signed application will be provided to the applicant for their record. (*Amended September 8, 2011*)

Trash cans that are uniform in appearance and are designated by the Historic Preservation Commission shall be used on the sidewalks for the convenience of shoppers and visitors. Trash can receptacles may be staff approved if they meet the following criteria:

Criteria for the Staff Approval of Trash Receptacles (does require staff review)

1. Height requirement of 34" - 38".
 2. Diameter requirement of 26" - 30".
 3. Trash receptacles must be comprised of metal and painted dark green.
 4. All staff approved trash cans must be placed so as to not interfere with pedestrian traffic along a sidewalk or storefront and must maintain a minimum 36" of sidewalk clearance. Trash receptacles may not be placed in any required parking.
 5. All staff approved trash receptacles will be of a design consistent with existing receptacles located along the Historic Square and surrounding properties. This design is illustrated at right.
- All trash can receptacles are required to receive either a Certificate of Appropriateness or staff approval prior to placement. An applicant requesting staff approval in this category is required to submit a completed application and all supporting documentation to City Staff for review. If it is determined the application can be staff approved, the application



will be signed and filed for record with the City. A copy of the signed application will be provided to the applicant for their record. (*Amended September 8, 2011*)

Supports for light fixtures, signs and traffic lights shall be in keeping with the historic period of the district, and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Supports for temporary signs, bunting, or festival decoration should not be affixed to historic building surfaces. All such manner of fixing materials to historic buildings shall be in a non-invasive manner and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Prohibited:

- *Styles and placement of street furniture and newspaper racks in locations without approval of the Historical Preservation Commission.*
- *The attachment of temporary signs, bunting and festive decorations to historic building surfaces.*
- *New holes in historic fabric of buildings or hardscape.*

Sidewalks, Walkways and Curbs

Old stone sidewalks and curbs shall be maintained in all historic districts.

Where old sidewalks must be replaced, such replacement shall be made of similar material and of similar sizes. The walkways along the north side of the town square (Bridge Street) shall be used as a guide for unit sizes and pattern of laying.

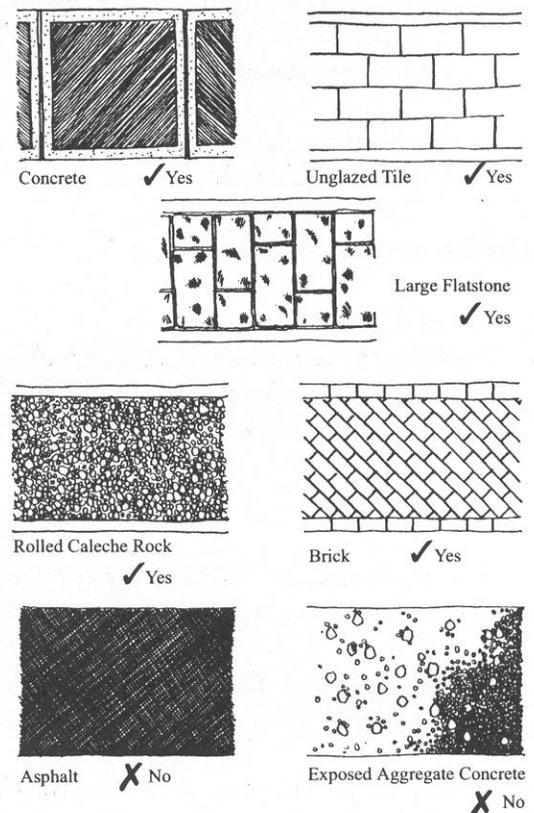
In historic districts where the majority of buildings were built before World War II, privately-owned sidewalks should be built of weathered limestone or concrete made with warm-toned cement, and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. In districts where the majority of buildings were built after World War II, sidewalks should be built of stone, brick, or concrete.

Where concrete is used for new construction of walks, a warm-toned cement, such as Alamo, shall be used in the mix, rather than the blue-toned cement typically manufactured in North Texas plants. Joints and patterns similar to those in historic walks as defined above should be employed in construction.

Prohibited:

- *Replacing curbs and walks with inappropriate material.*

Types of Sidewalks and Walkways



- *Using non-historic construction methods or techniques, for example, joints or patterns inconsistent with the style or period of the area.*

Parking

The exterior design and materials of parking structures must be compatible with nearby historic buildings and districts.

Ramps of parking structures shall be contained within the structures, and concealed from street views by appropriate walls.

To supplement on-street parking, new construction is encouraged to provide parking behind buildings, out of view from the street.

Landscape hedges with a maximum height of three feet should be installed in conjunction with fences to screen parking areas in front yards of historic districts.

Prohibited:

- *Design and construction of parking areas in historic districts without approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. Approvals may also be required by other permitting authorities.*

Lighting

Fixtures predating the original installation of electrical supply (early 1900s) to the site should be avoided. Carriage lamps and gaslights are examples of inappropriate fixtures because they date from a period earlier than Granbury's history.

Artificial Lighting was introduced in Granbury in about 1903. Street Lighting was probably added shortly thereafter. Illumination levels in public exterior spaces seldom exceeded 1- to 2-foot candles, a level unacceptable by current standards.

The type of fixture selected should be compatible with the original period of the building or buildings in the historic district, otherwise concealed or of a very simple design.

An average illumination level of 5-foot-candles or less is preferred, except where specific site conditions warranting different light levels are approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Among building features receiving lighting, the color and intensity of lighting should be balanced. Sign illumination should be balanced in color with light in display windows. Warm-colored light, 3000-3500 degrees Kelvin in temperature, is preferred for all exterior lighting, since this is most pleasing to the eye and will most easily draw attention to window displays. Concealed indirect lighting from spot and flood sources can effectively highlight features and surfaces for interest.

Prohibited:

- *Blue-toned fluorescent or yellow sodium vapor for their unflattering effects on human features. Use of fluorescent lights for buildings dated before 1936.*
- *Neon for buildings whose original period is before 1930, and in historic districts where the overall period is earlier.*
- *H.I.D., halogen or xenon lighting.*
- *Any lighting source higher than 3500 degrees Kelvin or lower than 2850 degrees Kelvin in temperature.*
- *Illumination levels higher than 5-foot-candles without approval of the Historic Preservation Commission.*

Building Setbacks and Spacing

Historic town business centers of the 1880s were laid out with buildings abutting each other, to establish an urban place in the wilderness. There were no front yard or side yard setbacks, and all buildings presented an even street façade to the sidewalk.

New buildings within the courthouse square business district shall continue the historic building spacing. New buildings that break the wall of façades or create setback spaces shall not be permitted.

Except as approved by the Historic Preservation Commission, historic façades in rear yards shall be respected, and remain free of additions. Inappropriate existing conditions in rear yards will be encouraged to be removed so that public access to buildings behind those on the courthouse square may be invited, as well as rear access to buildings on the square. Storage shall be accommodated within buildings, and prohibited in rear yards.

Prohibited:

- *Setbacks in side yards.*
- *Storage in rear yards.*
- *New buildings that create setback spaces in the downtown courthouse district.*

HISTORIC LANDMARKS OR NEIGHBORHOOD (NON-BUSINESS) HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Landscape Commentary:

Early historic landscape was minimal, and based on locally available plants. Few native trees or plants other than the live oak and cedar were evergreen in Hood County and on its surrounding prairies. Creek bottoms held sycamores, cottonwoods and mixed hardwoods while upland areas were covered with post oaks as part of the western cross timbers.

Bois d'arc was used for fence rows and wind screens where enough water was available. For residential use, chinaberry, elm, hackberry and cottonwood were popular. Street trees were hackberry. Trees for practical use, such as the nut trees and soapberry, were encouraged, some medicinal plants were cultivated, and the wildflowers and grape were domesticated, the latter in arbors for shade as well as fruit.

Plants such as crepe myrtle, mimosa and all broadleaf evergreen shrubs were imported after Anglo settlement. Acid-loving plants from eastern Texas and the old south only succeeded as fashion where nostalgia was strong and time for constant cultivation was available.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Bermuda grass was used for lawns. St. Augustine, a water-loving grass, and other hybrids became fashionable after World War II.

Moisture from irrigation systems over time will cause “rising damp” in masonry foundations, which leaches the strength of masonry mortar. For protection of a building's foundation, plantings near it should be avoided.

Within neighborhoods built before World War II, employ native plant species wherever possible to reinforce the original character of Granbury, and conserve use of water.

Within neighborhoods built before World War II, Bermuda grass is preferred as an appropriate lawn cover.

Prohibited:

- *Grass or verdure no higher than six inches.*
- *Non-functioning equipment and debris in yards. These should be removed or concealed in an appropriate manner as approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.*
- *Slope grades away from historic buildings with a minimum of less than 1/4-inch per foot and plantings less than 10 feet from foundations.*
- *Irrigation within ten feet of historic building foundations.*

Curbs, Driveways and Sidewalks

Acceptable materials for driveways and sidewalks are concrete, local limestone or brick. For buildings built before World War II, concrete or local limestone is acceptable for curbs and preferred for driveways and sidewalks. Colored concrete, except for warm-toned stains matching local limestone, shall not be allowed. For historic buildings built after World War II, concrete or brick are preferred for driveways and sidewalks.

Except in commercial historic districts, concrete sidewalks should have expansion divider strips every three feet in both directions. (See ***Sidewalks and Walkways*** in the **Historic Business Districts Section**.) For buildings built before World War II, the introduction of a second material worked in patterns and combined with the primary material are not allowed.

Limestone curbs should be maintained and preserved. (There are old limestone curbs available in the city that may be used for replacements.)

Curb cuts for driveways shall be a maximum width of 18 feet for two lanes.

Prohibited:

- *Adding or enlarging sidewalks, driveways, or walkways without a Certificate of Appropriateness.*
- *Removing historic material, such as old limestone curbs, without a Certificate of Appropriateness.*
- *Colored concrete, except for warm-toned stains matching local limestone, for use around buildings built before World War II.*
- *More than one paving material worked in patterns in historic districts built before World War II.*

Accessory or Secondary Buildings

In addition to the primary structures, the neighborhoods in 19th and early 20th century Granbury often had smaller buildings located in backyards and alleys. These buildings were used for a variety of purposes such as privies, carriage houses, stables, kitchens and tenant or alley houses.

Some properties had more than one of these structures. In appearance, the secondary buildings usually matched the primary structures in materials and design, but were smaller and simpler.

Many secondary or accessory buildings have disappeared because modern conveniences replaced their original usefulness. Other secondary buildings have survived and continue in their original use, such as carriage houses and stables that now function as garages or apartments or both.

The Historic Preservation Commission encourages keeping early secondary buildings in good repair and condition, just like the historic primary building. The guidelines that apply to primary residential buildings, also apply to detached structures, both original or new to the property. These are the most important points:

- Maintain materials that are in keeping with both the primary and secondary structures on the property.
- Keep details simple, including porches and stoops.
- Use wooden garage doors.

Prohibited:

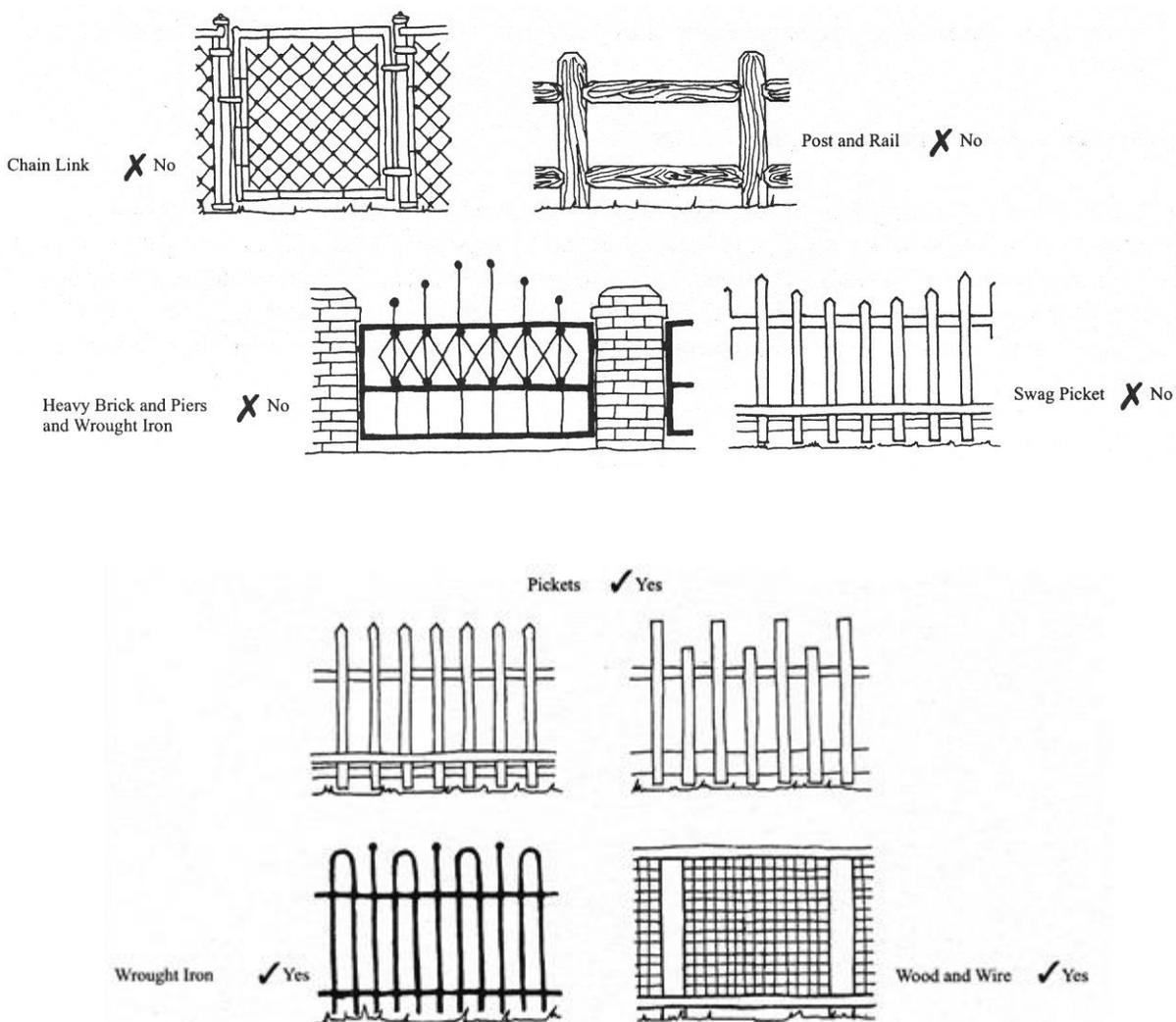
- *Demolishing an existing secondary building in lieu of repairing.*
- *Failing to maintain an original secondary building.*

- *Inappropriate materials, scale or design of a new secondary structure.*
- *Building or relocating a secondary structure that is as large or larger than the primary residence.*

Fencing

Fences must be appropriate to the period of the historic structure and the surrounding neighborhood or district. Wrought iron, decorative wire with cast-iron post, and level-height picket fences are appropriate for most of Granbury's historic homes that are now in historic business districts, and for most of Granbury's historic homes in neighborhoods.

Decorative fences no higher than 48 inches are allowed in front yards. All fencing must maintain a 25-foot visibility triangle.

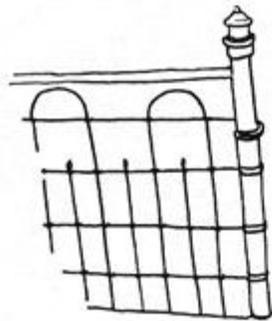


The Historic Preservation Commission will consider requests for other types of fences for backyards on an individual basis.

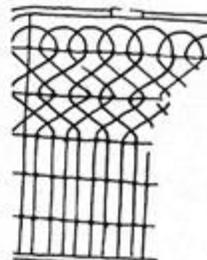
In the downtown courthouse square historic district, fencing is not permitted in the fronts of buildings. Fencing in the rear of a building on the square must not restrict public access to the back entrance, or restrict public access to buildings behind the square.

Prohibited:

- *Erecting a fence without a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission.*
- *Fencing in the fronts of buildings in the downtown courthouse square historic district.*
- *Fences higher than 48 inches in front yards.*
- *Inappropriate styles of fencing (such as chain link around a Victorian dwelling) for a particular home or district.*
- *Lack of maintenance of historic fencing.*



Victorian Fencing



Victorian Gate