

3.2.12. Landscape and Site Features

The Importance of Landscaping

Although not regulated by Fredericksburg’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, landscaping can play an important role in enhancing a historic property’s integrity of setting and feeling. To maximize a historic property’s integrity of setting and feeling, avoid removing or damaging any significant tree or identified significant historic landscape feature.

Landscaping also can have an important impact on adjacent historic building fabric. To ensure that landscaping does not accelerate deterioration of historic fabric, avoid directing irrigation and/or runoff toward historic building elements susceptible to water infiltration. Also minimize vegetation touching historic building fabric. Avoid obscuring character-defining features with non-historic landscaping. Consider using landscaping to highlight character-defining features of the historic building.

Maintenance

- (a) Preserve and maintain historic fences and walls and treated materials according to accepted preservation Standards (SOI Standards 2, 5, 6,7).

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required if visible from the ROW	Recommended

Historic Front Yards: Open versus Fenced

While there are some historic front-yard fences and walls, they are the exception rather than the norm. For most of Fredericksburg’s historic district, continuous, open front yards are a character-defining landscape feature.

Alterations

- (b) Do not construct front-yard fences where they were not present historically, unless necessitated by a safety issue or an adjacent noxious use (SOI Standard 3).

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Recommended	Recommended

- (c) If a safety issue or adjacent noxious use necessitates adding a new front-yard fence, it must be period-appropriate, minimize obstruction of views of character-defining features of the building, and be a maximum of 3 feet tall; opaque walls are not appropriate for front yards in residential blocks (SOI Standard 9).

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Recommended

Defining “Front Yard” versus “Back Yard” Fences

For the purpose of these standards, a “front-yard fence” is any fence that extends forward from the front façade of the main building toward the primary public street. A “back-yard fence” is any fence that recedes behind the front façade of a main building. A side fence extending forward from the front façade of the main building toward the public street must follow the standards for a front-yard fence. (See fig. 3-42).

- (d) For residential uses/blocks, a new back-yard fence may be added, provided that it is a maximum of 6 feet tall unless additional height is justified by an adjacent noxious use (SOI Standard 9). Heights are measured from the grade plane to the highest point on the fence.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Recommended

- (e) Select the style of fence to be compatible with the style and era of the main building on the property (SOI Standard 9).

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Recommended	Recommended	Recommended

- (f) Potentially appropriate materials for fences include rough-hewn posts, wood pickets, metal pickets, wood lattice, or wood posts with rails; solid metal siding is never appropriate for fencing (SOI Standard 9).

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Required

Fencing Codes and Ordinances

Note also that all new fences and walls for backyards and side yards must comply with other applicable codes and ordinances (see *Appendix D*).

Restoration

(g) If research documents that a historic fence or wall is missing, consider replicating and restoring it (SOI Standards 3, 6).

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Recommended	Recommended	Recommended



Figure 3-42. Example of a character-defining historic stone wall at 212 W Orchard Street, which should be preserved and maintained. Source: CMEC 2019 Historic Resources Survey.



Figure 3-43. Example of an **inappropriate** side-yard fence at 606 W. Creek Street. The fence should not protrude forward from the front façade unless given special approval due to safety issues or noxious adjacent uses. If approved, the front-yard fence should be partially transparent and no more than 3 feet tall. Source: City of Fredericksburg Historic Preservation Office.