

D/DRC Case

2225 Park Street

Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District

TMS: 09012-12-06

DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
HISTORIC AGENDA
EVALUATION SHEET
Case #5

ADDRESS: 2225 Park Street

APPLICANT: Todd Kolb, property owner

TAX MAP REFERENCE: TMS#09012-12-06

USE OF PROPERTY: Residential

REVIEW DISTRICT: Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District

NATURE OF REQUEST: Request for a Certificate of Design Approval for site improvements.

FINDINGS/COMMENTS:

Based on Sec. 17-655 in the City's Code of Ordinances, staff to the D/DRC has the authority to issue Certificates of Design Approval (CDA) for fences and walls in protection areas, architectural conservation districts, and historic commercial districts. They may also review and approve site improvements for contributing buildings in historic districts. Although staff routinely issues CDAs for fences and site improvements that are in compliance with the City's Ordinances or the applicable design guidelines for the district, staff's denial of proposals that do not comply may be appealed to the D/DRC.

This particular proposal is for a trellis consisting of two 36' wide by 11' tall sections to be installed along the right side property line of 2225 Park Street in the Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District. In essence, the design is more of a screening wall than a simple garden trellis. The proposal was submitted to staff for review, but staff was unable to approve the design due to its height and placement. Correcting the placement of the trellis is an easy solution, as it would comply if it were moved back slightly to match the setback of the right front corner of the house (not the porch). The height, however, would need to be reduced to a maximum of 7' to comply with Sec. 17-277 in the City's Code of Ordinances. The applicant has an existing 6' high wood privacy fence along the property line and does not think the extra 1' of height will provide a significant improvement in privacy.

Staff, along with City of Columbia Housing and Zoning Inspectors, met with the applicant at the property to review the proposed location of the trellis. The Zoning Inspector discussed the City's height regulations with the applicant and stated that any screening wall or fence over 7' would require a variance through the Board of Zoning Appeals. As with any variance, the Board will ask if the additional height is the minimum amount necessary to accomplish the applicant's goal.

The most prevalent type of fencing in all of the City's Architectural Conservation Districts is a 6' wood privacy fence. In fact, design guidelines for other districts (including Melrose Heights/Oaklawn, Oakwood Court, and Wales Garden) state that fences shall be no more than 4' in height in the front yard setback and no more than 6' in height on side and rear elevations. Although Elmwood Park does not currently have design guidelines with specific language regarding fence materials and heights, the Ordinance states that all projects must adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as amended in Sec. 17-674(d).

As proposed, the project is not sympathetic to the historic character of the Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District and does not meet Zoning regulations for height. Staff recommends reducing the height of the trellis to a more compatible height, not to exceed seven feet. Alternatively, landscaping could be used in lieu of the trellis to provide a higher and denser privacy screen. The applicant has mentioned the potential use of Cypress trees if the trellis cannot be constructed as proposed. Planting trees or other landscaping for screening would not require design review.

PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM THE CITY ORDINANCE

Section 17-674(d) Criteria for review of design of structures and sites.

(1)b In architectural conservation districts and protection areas, the historic character of a district shall be retained and preserved through the preservation of historic materials and features which characterize the district.

The applicant's proposal to install two 36' wide by 11' high wood trellis sections along the right side property line is not in keeping with the historic character of the district. There are a variety of fence types in Elmwood Park including combinations of wood, brick, and iron; however, there are no residential fences that approach the height of the proposed trellis. As drawn, the two sections combined would be approximately 80' long and just over 11' high. The proposal places the sections directly in front of an existing 6' wood privacy fence to create a very large privacy screen. Although decorative trellises can be found throughout the district, they are typically used as garden features or to frame a side yard gate. This proposal is much more elaborate and the sheer size places it in the screening wall/fence category instead of a simple garden trellis.

The front section of the proposed trellis would be very visible from the Park Street side of the public right-of-way. The rear section of the proposed trellis would not be as visible from the Park Street side; however, the upper portion would be highly visible from Aiken Street through the back yard of 2229 Park Street.

Sec. 17-277. - Projections into required yards

The general definition of yards as set forth in section 17-55 states that yards are unoccupied and unobstructed by a structure or portion of a structure from 48 inches above the finished grade level of the ground. However, the general definition shall be construed subject to the following exceptions and interpretations:

- (3) *Subject to the height restrictions contained within this Section, screening walls and fences may only be permitted within a required yard upon the determination of the zoning administrator that the fence or wall:*
- a. Does not impede site vision clearance for driveways or streets; and*
 - b. Does not include gates that swing outward into sidewalks or public rights-of-way.*

A fence or wall not over seven feet in height is permitted outright in side or rear yards, provided that no wall or fence in excess of five feet is permitted within six feet of a residential structure on adjacent property.

The applicant's proposal for an 11' high wood trellis along the right side of the property line is 4' beyond the maximum height allowed by Zoning. Staff has recommended for the height to be reduced to 7' to be in compliance. The applicant has stated that 7' is not high enough to provide adequate screening.

- (10) *Fence posts, wall columns, and decorative elements located thereupon may extend 12 inches above the height restrictions for fences and walls contained within this chapter. Where fence posts or wall columns are used to frame a gate, said posts or columns may extend 36 inches above the height restrictions for fences and walls contained within this chapter. This allowance for additional height may extend to the gate itself and/or a header across the gate provided that the width measured at the outer edge of each associated post or column does not exceed eight feet. No allowance for additional height within this section shall permit any feature of any fence or wall to extend above seven feet high.*

As stated above, seven feet is the maximum height allowed by Zoning, and no allowance for additional height shall permit any feature of any fence or wall to extend above seven feet high. The proposed trellis features decorative elements that extend beyond 11' as shown on the elevations. Staff recommends reducing the height of the trellis including the decorative elements on the top to a maximum of seven feet high.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff **does not** recommend granting a Certificate of Design Approval for the project as proposed because it does not meet Sections 17-674 and 17-277 of the City's Code of Ordinances.

Staff would be happy to work with the applicant to develop a solution that is more in keeping with the historic character of the district and meets Zoning height requirements.

2225 Park Street – Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District



Existing conditions – Dotted line represents proposed height of trellis

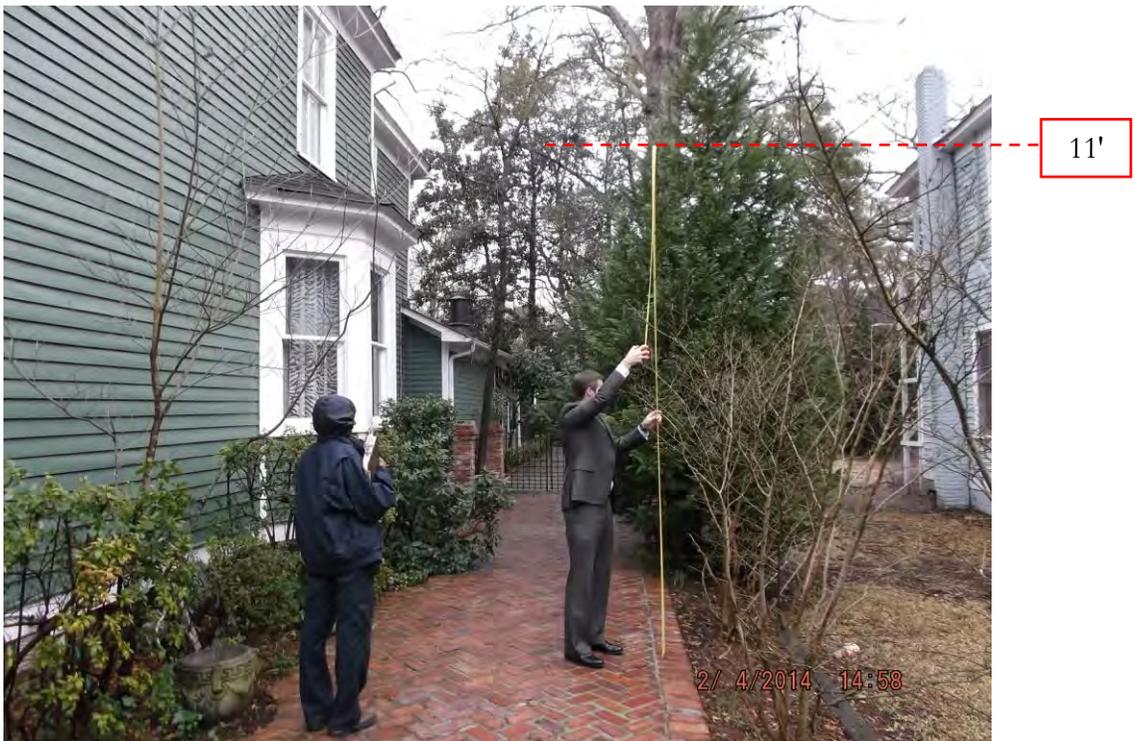


Proposed location for 36' x 11' trellis section

2225 Park Street – Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District



Existing brickwork and iron fence



Staff measuring height of proposed 11' trellis

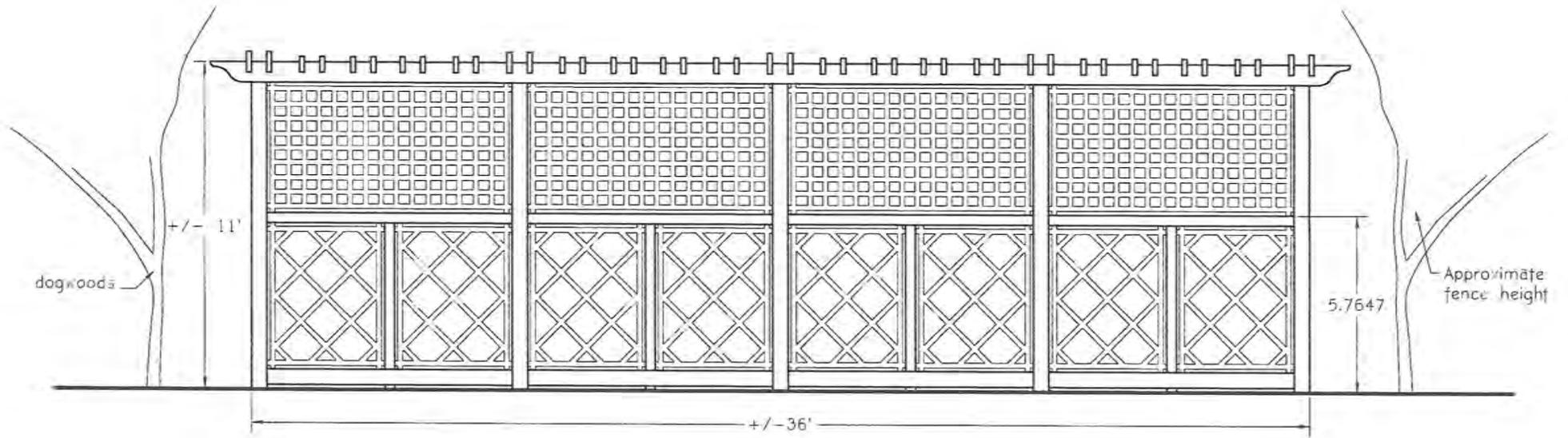
2225 Park Street – Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District

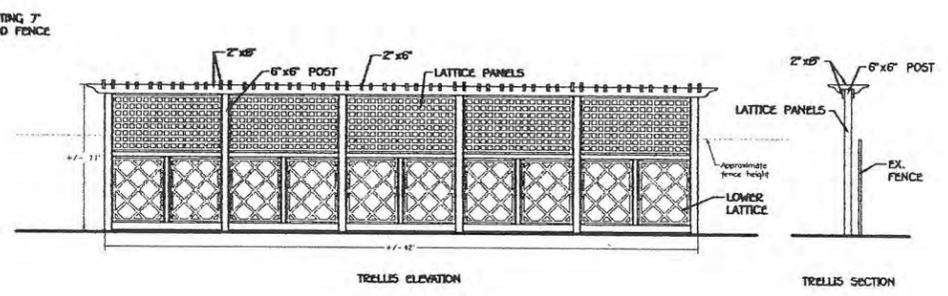
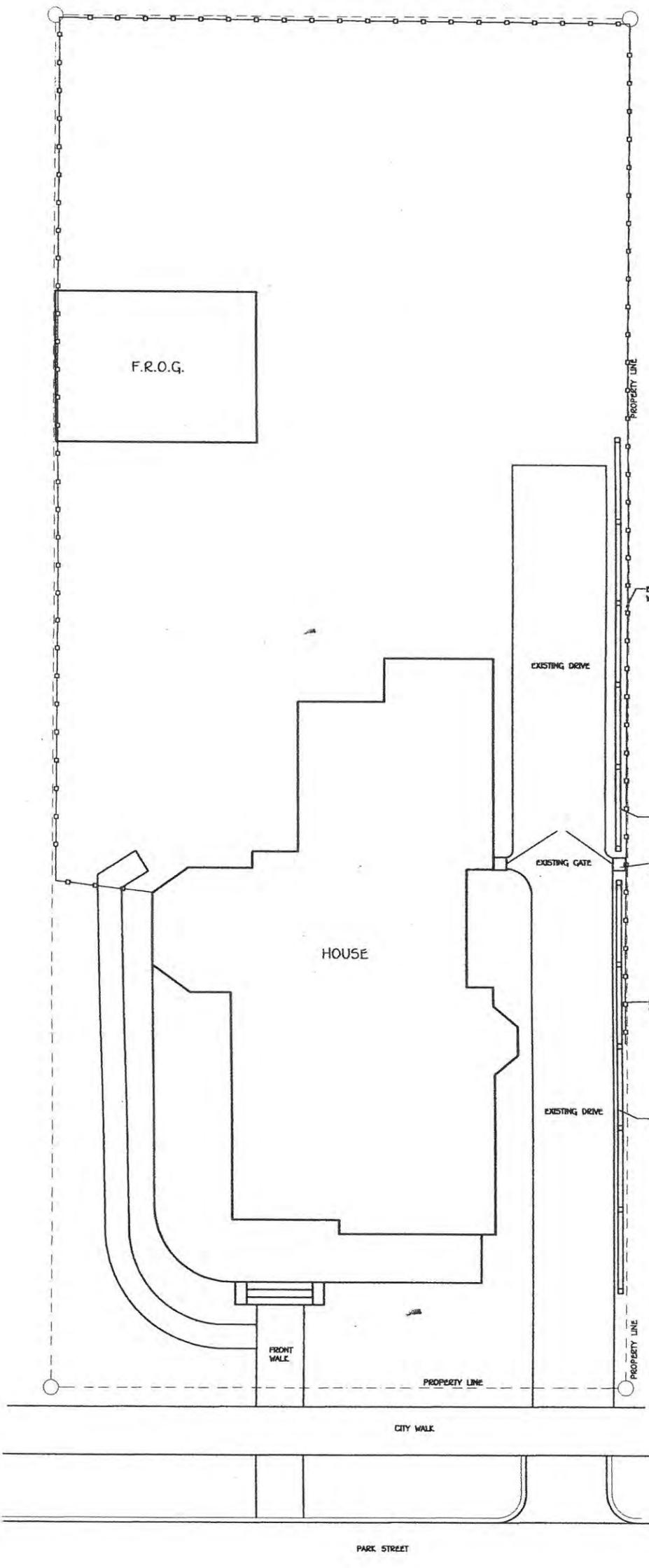


Rear view of 2225 Park Street from Aiken Street



Approximate visibility of trellis sections shown in red





PROPERTY LINE

F.R.O.G.

HOUSE

EXISTING DRIVE

EXISTING GATE

EXISTING 7" WOOD FENCE

EXISTING 7" WOOD FENCE

EXISTING DRIVE

PROPOSED TRELLIS

EXISTING BRICK COLUMNS

PROPOSED TRELLIS

FRONT WALK

PROPERTY LINE

CITY WALK

PARK STREET

TRELLIS ELEVATION

TRELLIS SECTION

2" x 6"

6" x 6" POST

2" x 6"

LATTICE PANELS

2" x 6"

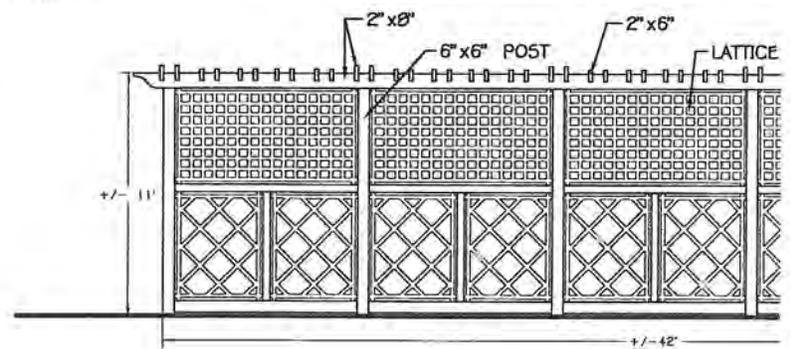
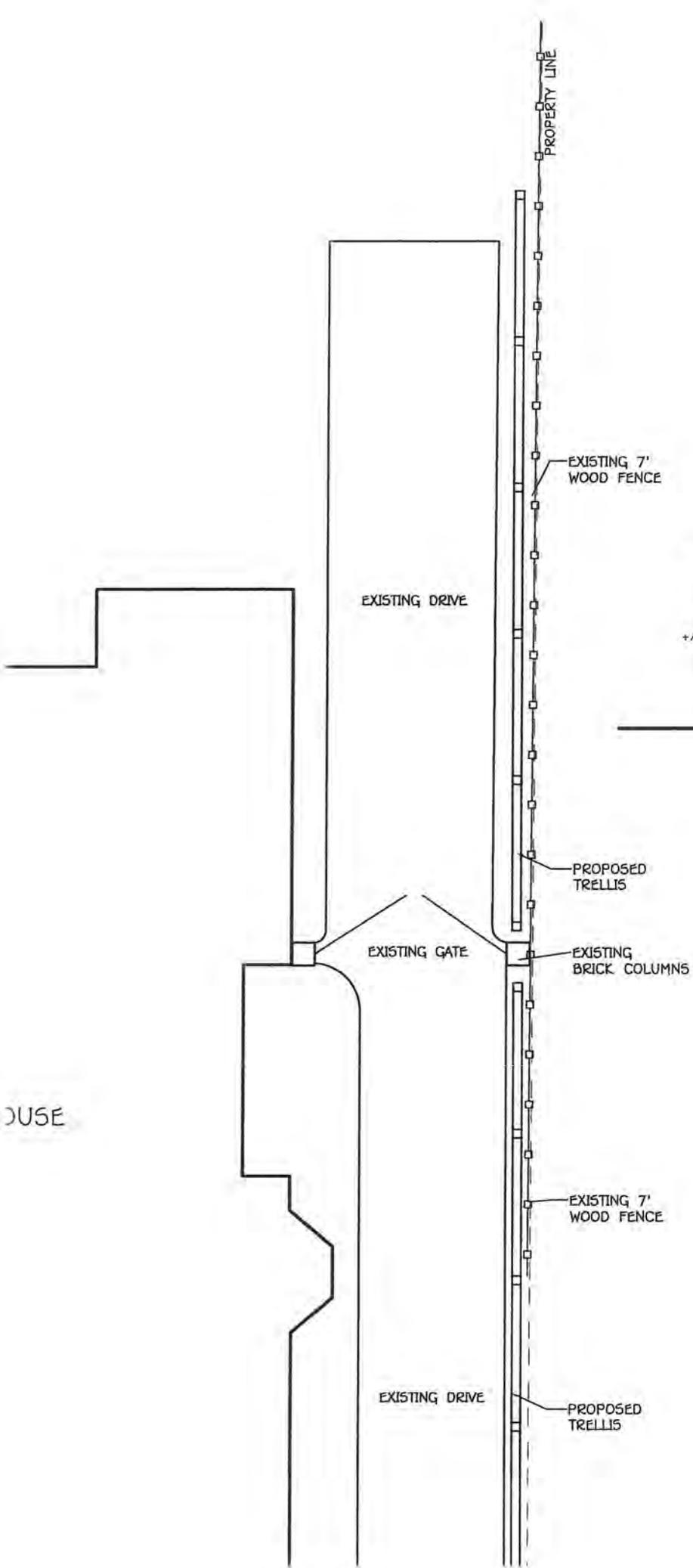
6" x 6" POST

LATTICE PANELS

Approximate fence height

LOWER LATTICE

EX. FENCE



TRELLIS ELEVATION

HOUSE