



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 21/24

STAFF REPORT

Address: 947 Harvard AveE

Applicant representative: Dorothy Bothwell, Bothwell Landscape Studio

Summary of proposed application:

Demolition of existing rockery and plantings including a diseased tree, existing concrete elements including driveway, north stairs off driveway, east stairs from sidewalk, and entry path.

Landscape elements constructed will include:

- Concrete and steel retaining walls
- Concrete stairs with handrail, path and entry steps.
- Concrete driveway
- Steel stairs with handrail
- New planting areas and lawn
- New irrigation and lighting system
- New trash/recycle enclosure
- New electric car charger.

Additional comments:

The house was built in 1939. Though the guidelines say grade should be handled by contouring the land, typical front yards in Harvard Belmont include retaining walls, typically of brick, rock or concrete, metal transparent fencing and extensive planting. The arborist report for the diseased tree proposed to be removed is included in the submittal. The code only requires a Certificate of Approval for landscaping visible from the public right of way, therefore the landscaping of the front yard only is being reviewed. There is no proposed alteration to the planting strip between the sidewalk and the street.

On January 3, 2024 the Merrily Chick of the Harvard Belmont review committee and staff conducted a site visit. Ms. Chick supported all elements of the landscape proposal except that she acknowledged that the use of metal in a retaining wall was different than most retaining wall and thought that the application should involve consideration by the ARC

committee to determine if the metal retaining wall was compatible with architecture of the house and the character of the district.

District ordinance, the Harvard Belmont Landmark District Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

Guidelines/Specific

2. CRITERIA AND VALUES

A significant number of buildings within the Harvard-Belmont Landmark District individually embody distinctive characteristics of early twentieth century eclectic residential architectures. These buildings and the mature landscaping which forms their backdrop, collectively create a contiguous streetscape and a neighborhood that are compatible in terms of design, scale, and use of materials.

B. SETTING

Guideline:

1. General

Guideline: Where possible changes in grade should be handled by contouring the land. Retaining walls when necessary shall keep to the minimum height required.

2. The Block

Guideline: Maintain yard space, especially that of front and side yards visible from the street. Front yards should not be used for parking areas. Protect or add trees and landscaping to help reinforce yard edges.

Guideline: Maintain the pattern of primary building entrances facing the street. Renovations should preserve the original building entrances facing the street.

3. Landscaping:

Guideline: Maintain existing landscaping, especially the mature trees.

Guideline: Maintain the alignment and spacing of street trees. Planting street trees where none now exist is encouraged. Existing street trees are important and pruning should be done only in a professional manner to maintain the trees health and to retain the natural form.

Guideline: Maintain a clear separation between sidewalk and street and between sidewalk and site. Harvard Belmont Landmark District Guidelines

Guideline: Keep the space between sidewalk and street as a green planting space maintaining the same width wherever possible. Ground covers may be used in place of grass. Do not use crushed rock, concrete or similar materials as the major surface material.

Guideline: Privacy of existing properties should be preserved

4. Fences and Walls:

Guideline: If fencing is required, low fences are encouraged especially in front yards to maintain the existing openness of the district.

Guideline: Fencing and wall materials shall be consistent with the district.

Guideline: Planting is encouraged to soften the visual appearance of fencing and walls.

Secretary of the Interior Standards

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.