



Staff Report

City of Pomona Planning Commission

August 27, 2025

FILE NO: VARIANCE – VAR-000472-2025

A request for a Variance to increase the maximum allowable height for a frontage yard fence from 4.5' to 6' and to reduce the required street lot line setback for frontage yard fences on a property within the Residential Neighborhood District 4 (RND-4).

ADDRESS: 1320 Hillcrest Drive, APN: 8360-026-006

APPLICANT: Norma Torres

PROJECT PLANNER: Alan Fortune, Associate Planner

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) in that the project consists of the new construction of an accessory structure (a fence) at an existing single-family home.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve File No. VAR-000472-2025 and adopt PC Resolution No. 25-012.

Project Information:

GENERAL PLAN DISTRICT: Residential Neighborhood

ZONING DISTRICT: Residential Neighborhood
District 4 (RND-4) [HB1-N1-R1]

TRANSECT: T3

SPECIFIC PLAN DISTRICT: N/A

GENERAL PLAN DENSITY: 20 DU/AC

Important Dates:

DATE SUBMITTED: June 18, 2025

DATE DETERMINED COMPLETE: July 29, 2025

Critical Issues:

- The Applicant is proposing the installation of a 6' tall wrought iron fence and gate within the front yard area to better secure the perimeter of the property. The occupation of the property owner creates an exceptional circumstance that justifies the proposed request to allow for increased security. Additionally, many nearby properties have similar existing 6' tall wrought iron fences and or vehicular gates that were legally permitted prior to the adoption of the current Pomona Zoning and Development Code.

Project Request:

The request involves the proposed installation of a 6' tall wrought iron fence and gate within the front yard area of an existing single-family home, exceeding the maximum fence and wall height of 4.5' within the applicable RND-4 Zoning District standards. The request also involves reducing the required street lot line setback for frontage yard fences of 3' to allow for a fence installation closer to property line.

Project Background:

The Applicant, Norma Torres, submitted a request for a Variance (VAR-0004722-2025) to increase the maximum allowable height for a frontage yard fence and to reduce the required street lot line setback for frontage yard fences from 4.5' to 6' and to reduce the required street lot line setback for frontage yard fences. The property currently has an existing 4' tall stucco block walls at or near the front property line adjacent to the existing walkway and driveway. The project proposes fencing the existing walkway and driveway with a 6' tall wrought iron fence (see attached Project Plans as Attachment No. 2). The proposed fence will have separate vehicular and pedestrian gates and will be decorative. The fence is proposed to be at a similar location and scale, and in a similar style and material as fences located on several adjacent properties in the immediate neighborhood.

Discussion of Critical Issues:

1. The property owner experiences a greater security risk due to the nature of their occupation (Attachment No. 6). The Applicant is requesting a variance to allow for a taller fence than what is typically allowed in order to increase security. Additionally, the fence will not have an adverse effect on the neighborhood streetscape as the fence continues the setback line as the existing wall on property and is at a similar height and location to front yard fences on nearby properties.

Community Input and Noticing:

A copy of the public hearing notice (Attachment No. 5) was published in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on August 15, 2025. A public hearing notice was also sent to the owners and occupants of properties within a 400-foot radius of the subject site on August 16, 2025. As of the date of this report, Staff has not received any comments in opposition to or in support of the proposed project.

Project Review:

The "Frontage Module" (N1) of the RND-4 Zoning District, applicable to the subject site, allows for "Type A3" fences with a maximum height of 4.5' and a minimum street lot line setback of 3' (See Attachment No. 6). The submitted variance is requesting relief from both these standards; to increase maximum height by 18" and to reduce minimum street lot line setback to allow a fence to be located at or very near to the front property line.

LAND DEVELOPMENT:

The subject site is developed with one single-family dwelling unit within the Ganesha Park neighborhood composed of primarily single-family homes. The site is nearby Ganesha Park to the southeast, the Pomona Fairplex to the north, and the Mountain Meadows community to the west. The subject site is located within the Residential Neighborhood District 4 (RND-4) Zoning District [HB1-N1-R1]. The proposed fence is not more intense than existing nearby fences nor is it beyond the scale of what is existing in the surrounding neighborhood. The fence is to be decorative wrought iron, a style of fencing that is compatible with the Spanish Revival architectural style of the primary home.

HEIGHT:

The proposed fence is 6' tall, 18" higher than the allowable maximum of 4.5'. The proposed height of 6' tall is in scale with the existing fences within the front yards of nearby properties within the neighborhood. The fence is composed of wrought iron and therefore does not compromise visibility. The proposed addition to existing portions of the fence with a stucco block wall base will not increase opacity as the material is composed of decorative wrought iron that allows full visibility.

STREET LOT LINE SETBACK:

The existing block wall fences are built at or very near to the front property line. The proposed fence calls for a decorative wrought iron fence with vehicular and pedestrian gates. The proposed fence and gates continue along this same setback and will not be closer to the front property line than the existing fences. The street lot line setback typically required for fences is intended to create a landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and fences on private property, however Hillcrest Drive does not have an installed sidewalk between the street and the front property line.

Required Findings:

The findings required in Section 1160.F.4 of the Pomona Zoning and Development Code for a Variance are as follows. The supporting reasons for each finding are contained in the attached Resolution (Attachment No. 1).

- a. The strict or literal interpretation and enforcement of the specified regulation would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary physical hardship inconsistent with the objectives of the development regulations contained in this Zoning and Development Code;

- b. There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved, or to the intended use of the property, that do not apply generally to other properties in the vicinity and in the same zoning district;
- c. The strict or literal interpretation and enforcement of the specified regulation would deprive the applicant of privileges enjoyed by the owners of other properties in the same zoning district;
- d. The granting of the Variance will not be detrimental to public health, safety or welfare, or be materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity; and
- e. The proposed Variance is consistent with the goals, policies, plans and exhibits of the General Plan, and the purposes of any applicable specific plan, and the purposes of this Zoning and Development Code.

Environmental Review:

Staff has determined that this project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines in that the project consists of the new construction of an accessory structure (a fence) at an existing single-family home.

Conditions of Approval:

The Conditions of Approval are contained in the attached Resolution (Attachment No. 1).

Conclusion:

The property owner experiences a greater security risk due to the nature of their occupation, therefore the approval of a variance to exceed the maximum allowable height for a frontage yard fence by 18" is justified (Attachment No. 6). Current fencing standards allowed within the RND-4 Zoning District do now allow for the 6' tall fences that are currently installed within the front yards of many homes within the neighborhood. The proposed fence would not be out of scale with those already installed nearby and is composed of a decorative material that is compatible with the architecture of the primary home. Because Hillcrest Drive does not have an improved sidewalk, reducing required street lot line setback for fencing will not have an adverse impact on the pedestrian experience. The fence will not have an adverse effect on the neighborhood streetscape as the fence continues the setback line as the existing wall on property and is at a similar height and location to front yard fences on nearby properties. Staff therefore recommends the Planning Commission approve the requested Variance.

Attachments:

- 1. Planning Commission Resolution No. 25-012
- 2. Project Plans
- 3. Site Photographs
- 4. Public Hearing Notice
- 5. Fence Type A3 Standards
- 6. Supplemental Documents from Applicant