

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

July 18, 2018

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2018-318  
**ADDRESS:** 2620 N MAIN AVE  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 1704 BLK 12 LOT N 62.5 FT OF 1, 2 & 3 ARB A1  
**ZONING:** O-2 H  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**DISTRICT:** Monte Vista Historic District  
**APPLICANT:** Cristina Maria Rohrs  
**OWNER:** Cristina Maria Rohrs  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Installation of a low stone perimeter wall  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** June 15, 2018  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** August 14, 2018  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to construct a low perimeter wall in the front and side yard of the property. The wall will be constructed of stone and measure approximately 2 feet in height with 3 foot tall posts.

## APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements*

### 1. Topography

#### A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- i. *Historic topography*—Avoid significantly altering the topography of a property (i.e., extensive grading). Do not alter character-defining features such as berms or sloped front lawns that help define the character of the public right-of-way. Maintain the established lawn to help prevent erosion. If turf is replaced over time, new plant materials in these areas should be low-growing and suitable for the prevention of erosion.
- ii. *New construction*—Match the historic topography of adjacent lots prevalent along the block face for new construction. Do not excavate raised lots to accommodate additional building height or an additional story for new construction.
- iii. *New elements*—Minimize changes in topography resulting from new elements, like driveways and walkways, through appropriate siting and design. New site elements should work with, rather than change, character-defining topography when possible.

### 2. Fences and Walls

#### A. HISTORIC FENCES AND WALLS

- i. *Preserve*—Retain historic fences and walls.
- ii. *Repair and replacement*—Replace only deteriorated sections that are beyond repair. Match replacement materials (including mortar) to the color, texture, size, profile, and finish of the original.
- iii. *Application of paint and cementitious coatings*—Do not paint historic masonry walls or cover them with stone facing or stucco or other cementitious coatings.

#### B. NEW FENCES AND WALLS

- i. *Design*—New fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character. Design of fence should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure.
- ii. *Location*—Avoid installing a fence or wall in a location where one did not historically exist, particularly within the front yard. The appropriateness of a front yard fence or wall is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences or wall should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them.
- iii. *Height*—Limit the height of new fences and walls within the front yard to a maximum of four feet. The appropriateness of a front yard fence is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them. If a taller fence or wall existed historically, additional height may be considered. The height of a new retaining wall should not exceed the height of the slope it retains.

iv. *Prohibited materials*—Do not use exposed concrete masonry units (CMU), Keystone or similar interlocking retaining wall systems, concrete block, vinyl fencing, or chain link fencing.

v. *Appropriate materials*—Construct new fences or walls of materials similar to fence materials historically used in the district. Select materials that are similar in scale, texture, color, and form as those historically used in the district, and that are compatible with the main structure. Screening incompatible uses—Review alternative fence heights and materials for appropriateness where residential properties are adjacent to commercial or other potentially incompatible uses.

#### **C. PRIVACY FENCES AND WALLS**

i. *Relationship to front facade*—Set privacy fences back from the front façade of the building, rather than aligning them with the front façade of the structure to reduce their visual prominence.

ii. *Location* – Do not use privacy fences in front yards.

#### **FINDINGS:**

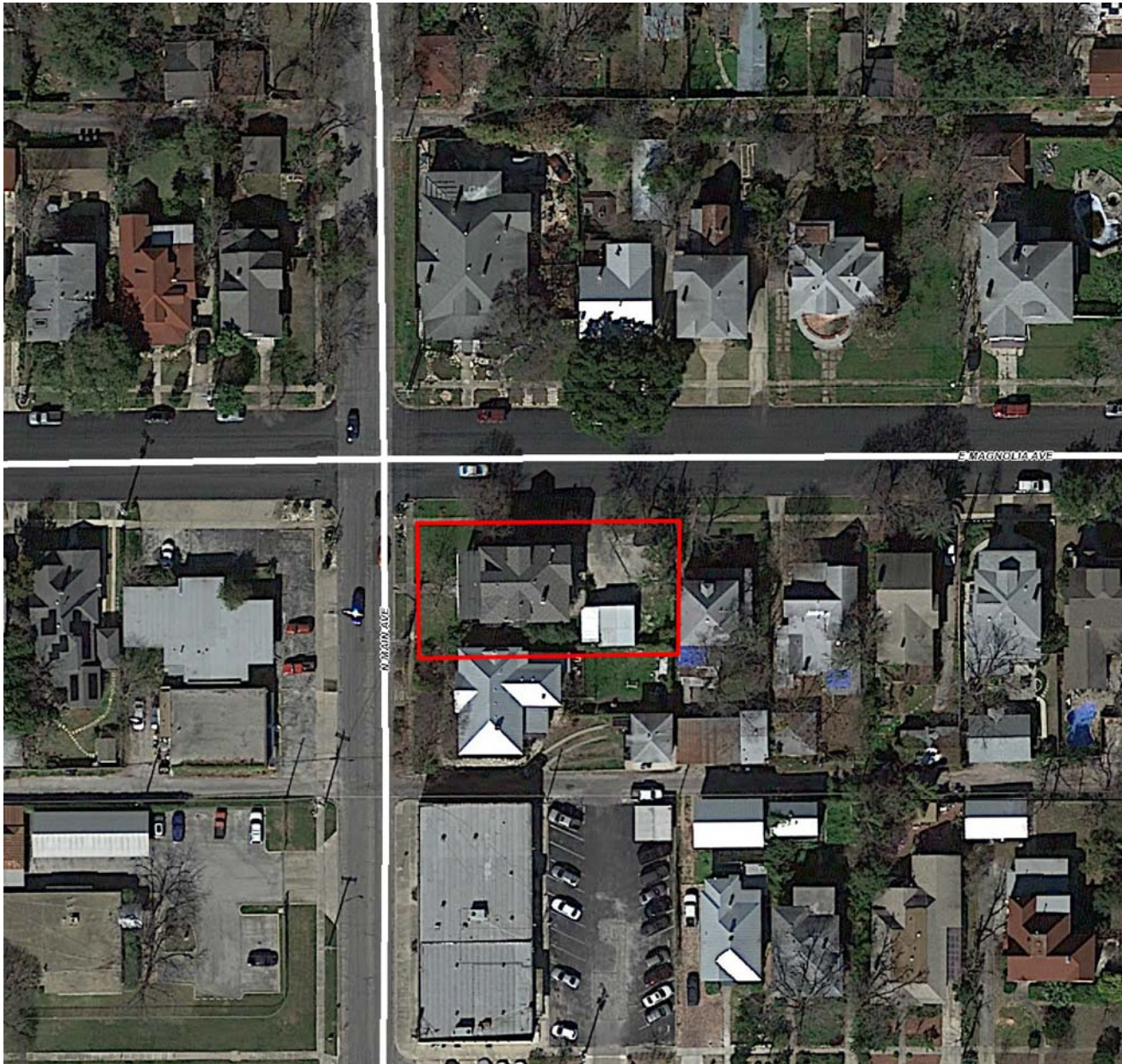
- a. The primary structure located at 2620 N Main Ave is a 2-story multifamily structure constructed in 1909 in the Neoclassical style. The structure sits on a corner lot at the intersection of N Main Ave and E Magnolia Ave. The home features a full-height front porch with fluted Corinthian columns, a broken transom light front door configuration, and prominent front and side-facing dormers with wide trim. The structure is contributing to the Monte Vista Historic District.
- b. **NEW WALL: HEIGHT AND LOCATION** - The applicant has proposed to install a low perimeter wall constructed of brick masonry. The wall will measure approximately 24” in height with 34” tall decorative posts. The wall will front the existing sidewalk fronting N Main Ave and E Magnolia Ave and terminate at the rear and south property line. The wall is requested for aesthetic reasons and will not function as a retaining wall for a slope or grade change. According to the Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements, new fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale and location. In the blocks surrounding the property, there are no properties with low, non-retaining perimeter walls on E Magnolia or N Main. A low perimeter wall in the front yard of a property on E Magnolia and at the intersection of N Main and E Huisache both retain ground elements. Staff does not find low perimeter walls to be historically common or characteristic of the district. Staff does not find the height and location consistent with the Guidelines.
- c. **NEW WALL: MATERIALS** – The applicant has proposed to construct the new fence out of brick masonry. Historic low retaining walls are typically constructed of stone; however, perimeter walls with no supportive element are historically uncommon. Staff does not find the proposal consistent with the Guidelines.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff does not recommend approval based on findings a through c.

#### **CASE MANAGER:**

Stephanie Phillips



## Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

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July 13, 2018 at 11:58 AM  
2621 N Main Ave  
San Antonio TX 78212  
United States





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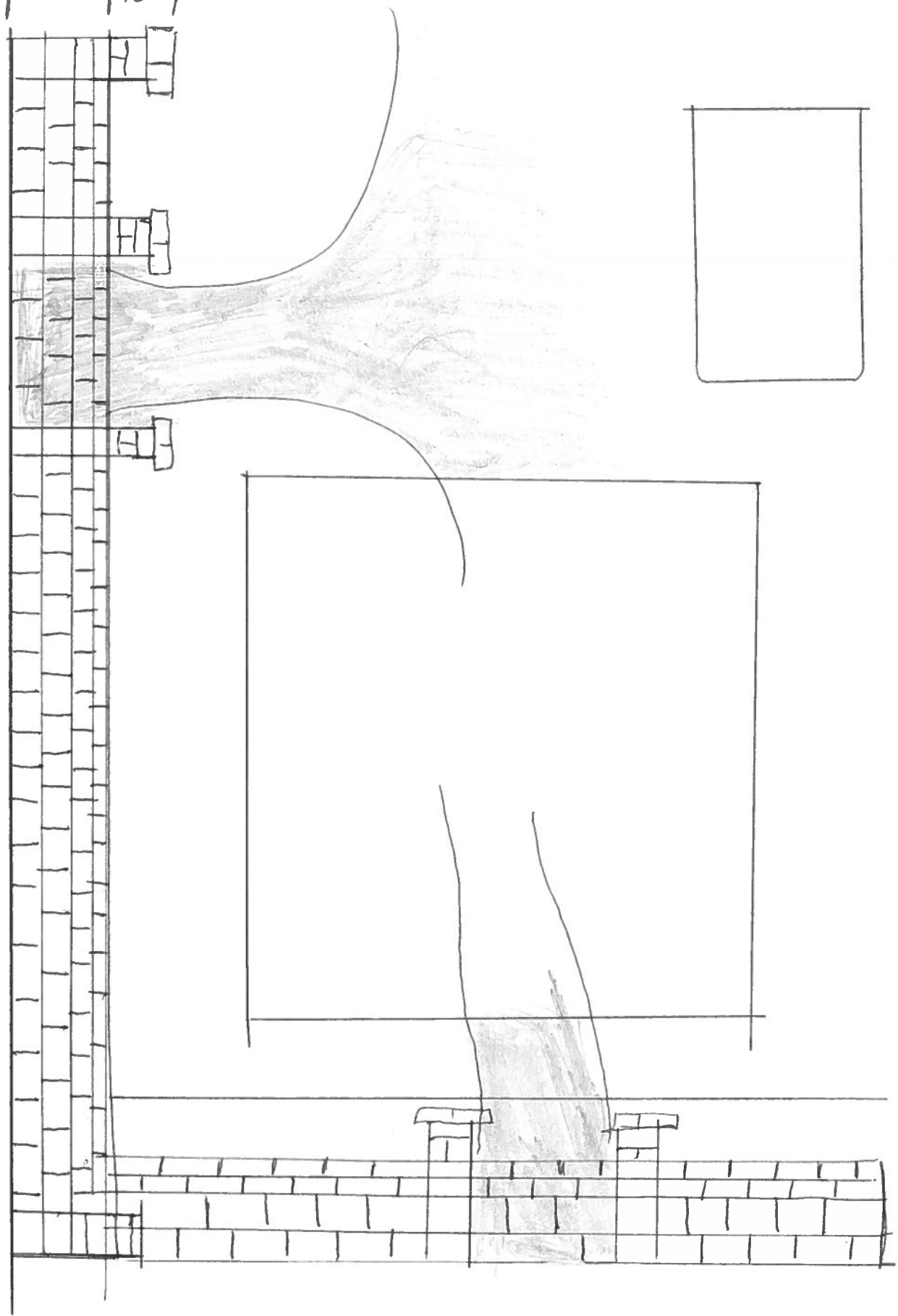








24" 10" 2







RETAINING WALL EXAMPLE - E MAGNOLIA





RETAINING WALL EXAMPLE - N MAIN & E HUISACHE