

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

August 07, 2019

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2019-441  
**ADDRESS:** 273 E ROSEWOOD AVE  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 6727 BLK 3 LOT 38 AND 39  
**ZONING:** RM-4,H  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**DISTRICT:** Monte Vista Historic District  
**APPLICANT:** Kenneth Such/SUCH KENNETH G & Magdalena Z.  
**OWNER:** Kenneth Such/SUCH KENNETH G & Magdalena Z.  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Retaining wall with front yard fence  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** July 19, 2019  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** September 17, 2019  
**CASE MANAGER:** Adam Rajper  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to construct a retaining wall along the east side of the property.

## 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:

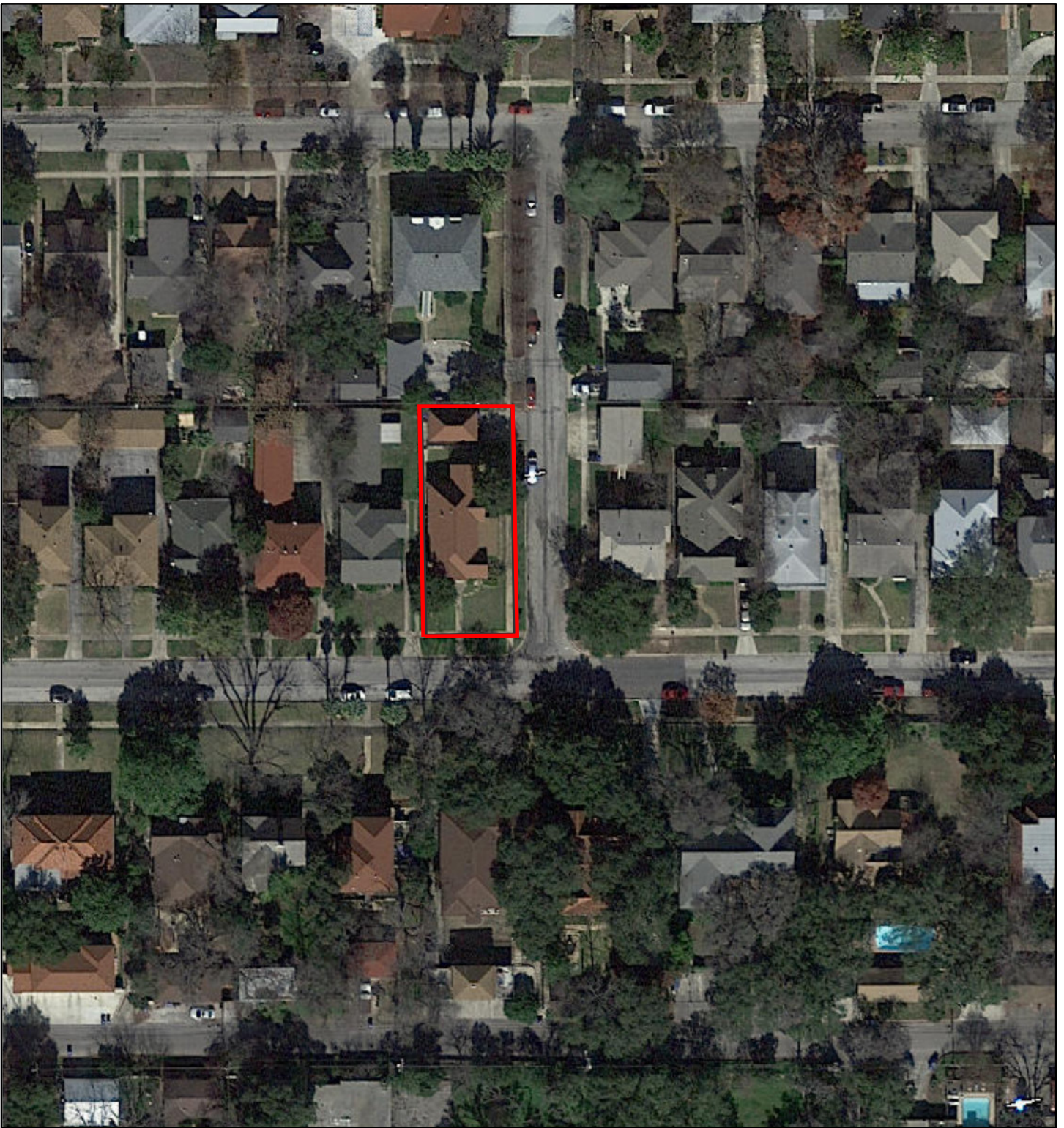
- a. The primary structure located at 273 E Roswood is a 1-story single-family vernacular residence constructed in the early twentieth-century. The home features an asymmetrical primary façade composition, stone cladding, and one over one wood windows. The home is a contributing structure to the Monte Vista Historic District.
- b. **RETAINING WALL: DESIGN** – The applicant has proposed to construct a retaining wall along the east side of the property. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, new retaining walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character and respond to the design and materials of the primary structure. Staff generally finds the concept of a retaining wall on this property to be appropriate based on existing precedents in the vicinity and the significant grade of the berm, but finds that the retaining wall should incorporate the same design details as the existing retaining wall on the north side of the property, including the curve detail where the existing wall meets the pillar fronting Gillespie.
- c. **RETAINING WALL: LOCATION** – The applicant has proposed to construct an approximately 100-foot long retaining wall along the east side of the property. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, new retaining walls should follow historic patterns. Front yard retaining walls can be found on the block and throughout the Monte Vista Historic District. Staff finds that the proposal is generally consistent with the Guidelines but that the retaining wall should terminate behind (to the north of) the existing concrete steps fronting Gillespie and turn the corner to meet the home to retain the character-defining concrete steps.
- d. **RETAINING WALL: HEIGHT** – The applicant has proposed to construct a retaining wall, not to exceed four feet in height, along the east side of the property. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, new retaining walls should follow historic patterns. Retaining walls on the block, including the retaining walls across the street at 268 E Rosewood and 301 E Rosewood, are generally shorter than four feet. Staff finds that the height of the proposed retaining wall should be limited to the minimum height required to retain the berm along Gillespie.
- e. **RETAINING WALL: MATERIALS** – The applicant has proposed to construct a retaining wall of concrete with a limestone veneer. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, new retaining walls should feature materials that are similar to those historically used in the district. Staff finds the proposal consistent with the Guidelines and complimentary to the primary structure.
- f. **RETAINING WALL: TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES** – The applicant has proposed to construct a retaining wall along the edge of the existing berm fronting Gillespie. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, character-defining features, such as berms, should be preserved. Staff finds that the applicant should preserve the existing berm.
- g. **CONCRETE STEPS** – The existing concrete steps fronting Gillespie are not identified in the submitted documents. Staff finds that the steps are character-defining features and should be retained.
- h. **FENCE** – The applicant has proposed to install a four-foot wrought iron fence on top of the proposed retaining wall. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, new front yard fences should follow historic fence placements in the district. Staff finds that front yard fences are not prevalent on the block. Therefore, staff finds the proposal inconsistent with the Guidelines.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the retaining wall based on finding a and h, with the following stipulations:

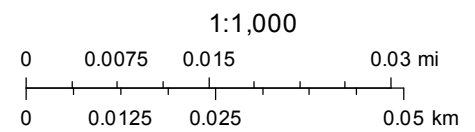
- i. That the retaining wall incorporate the same design details as the existing retaining wall on the north side of the property, including the curve detail where the existing wall meets the pillar fronting Gillespie.
- ii. That the retaining wall terminate behind (to the north of) the existing concrete steps fronting Gillespie and turn the corner to meet the home.
- iii. That the retaining wall be limited to the minimum height required to retain the berm along Gillespie. The applicant is required to provide documentation that clearly justifies the chosen height, such as a letter from a qualified professional, including a landscape architect, contractor, or engineer.
- iv. That the existing berm be preserved.
- v. That the existing concrete steps fronting Gillespie be retained.
- vi. That the retaining wall not feature a front yard fence.
- vii. That the applicant submit updated documents reflecting the above changes to staff for review and approval prior to receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness.

# 273 E Rosewood



July 31, 2019

— User drawn lines











273 East  
Rosewood Avenue

E Rosewood Ave

E Rosewood Ave

E Rosewood Ave

Gillespie St

Gillespie St

Gillespie St

Gillespie St

E Rosewood Ave





Gillespie St















TOP VIEW

ROSEWOOD AVE

EXISTING PARKWAY

EXISTING SIDEWALK

House  
273 E ROSEWOOD AVE

EXISTING 2 FT WALL

GARAGE

EXISTING 4 FT WALL

PROPOSED 4 FT WALL  
100 FT TOTAL

EXISTING SIDEWALK

EXISTING PARKWAY

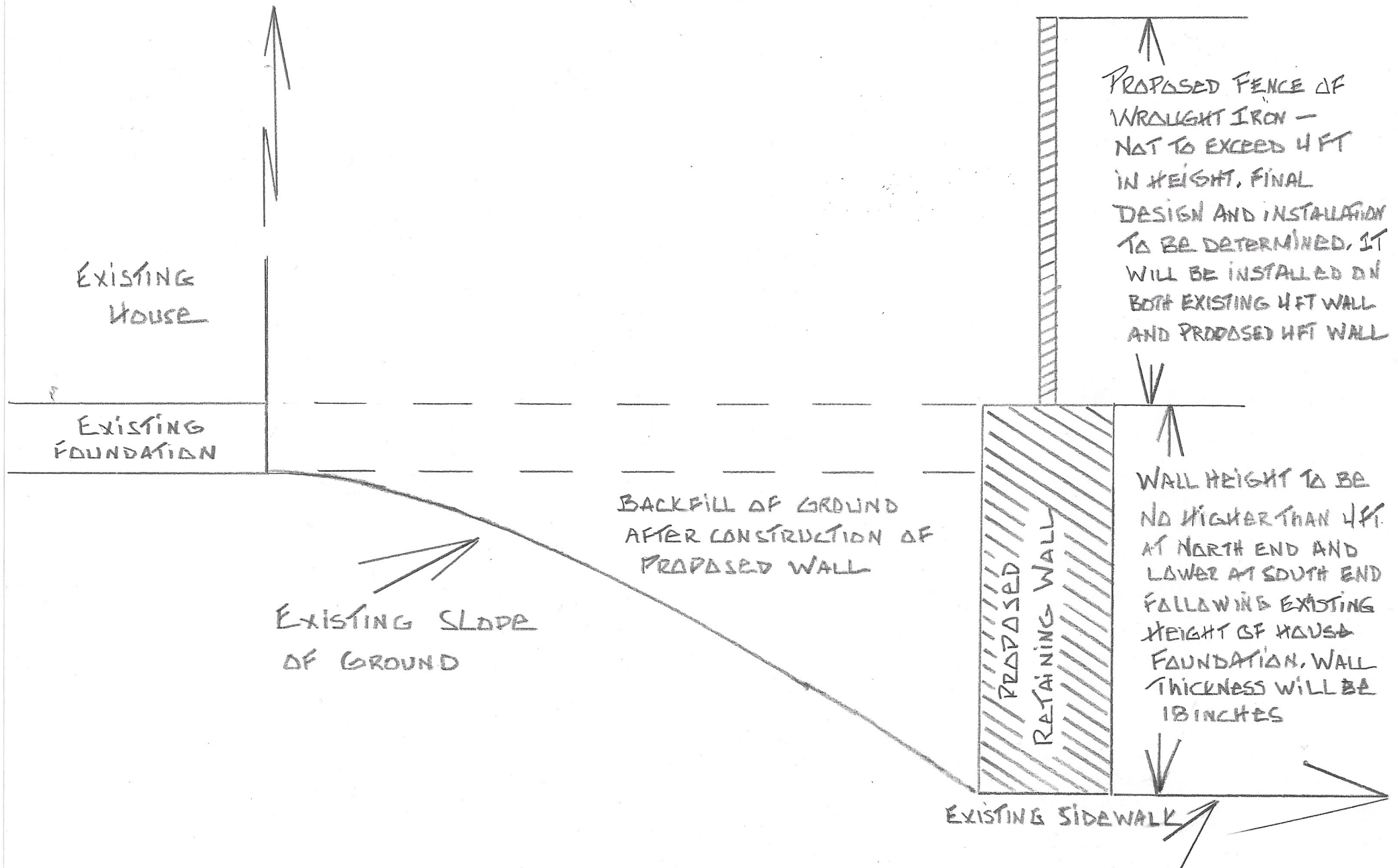
DRIVEWAY

GILLESPIE AVE





## CROSS SECTION VIEW





268 E Rosewood





268 E Rosewood





303 E Rosewood



















































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## 273 E Rosewood Ave

San Antonio, TX 78212



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