

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION COMPLIANCE AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD

July 19, 2024

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-234
ADDRESS: 820 N ALAMO ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 452 BLK 30 LOT 6
ZONING: FBZ T4-2, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
APPLICANT: Nicholas Marquez/BAR HOUSE LLC
OWNER: Nicholas Marquez/BAR HOUSE LLC
TYPE OF WORK: Railing installation; landscape and site work modifications
APPLICATION RECEIVED: June 17, 2024
60-DAY REVIEW: August 16, 2024
CASE MANAGER: Rachel Rettaliata

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to:

1. Install brick paving in the front yard.
2. Install a 4-foot-tall metal front yard fence.
3. Replace the existing front walkway with an 8-foot-wide concrete walkway.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

1. Topography

A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- 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.
- 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.
- 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

- Preserve*—Retain historic fences and walls.
- 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.
- 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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

3. Landscape Design

A. PLANTINGS

i. *Historic Gardens*—Maintain front yard gardens when appropriate within a specific historic district.

ii. *Historic Lawns*—Do not fully remove and replace traditional lawn areas with impervious hardscape. Limit the removal of lawn areas to mulched planting beds or pervious hardscapes in locations where they would historically be found, such as along fences, walkways, or drives. Low-growing plantings should be used in historic lawn areas; invasive or large-scale species should be avoided. Historic lawn areas should never be reduced by more than 50%.

iii. *Native xeric plant materials*—Select native and/or xeric plants that thrive in local conditions and reduce watering usage. See UDC Appendix E: San Antonio Recommended Plant List—All Suited to Xeriscape Planting Methods, for a list of appropriate materials and planting methods. Select plant materials with a similar character, growth habit, and light requirements as those being replaced.

iv. *Plant palettes*—If a varied plant palette is used, incorporate species of taller heights, such informal elements should be restrained to small areas of the front yard or to the rear or side yard so as not to obstruct views of or otherwise distract from the historic structure.

v. *Maintenance*—Maintain existing landscape features. Do not introduce landscape elements that will obscure the historic structure or are located as to retain moisture on walls or foundations (e.g., dense foundation plantings or vines) or as to cause damage.

B. ROCKS OR HARDSCAPE

i. *Impervious surfaces* —Do not introduce large pavers, asphalt, or other impervious surfaces where they were not historically located.

ii. *Pervious and semi-pervious surfaces*—New pervious hardscapes should be limited to areas that are not highly visible, and should not be used as wholesale replacement for plantings. If used, small plantings should be incorporated into the design.

iii. *Rock mulch and gravel* - Do not use rock mulch or gravel as a wholesale replacement for lawn area. If used, plantings should be incorporated into the design.

C. MULCH

Organic mulch – Organic mulch should not be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Organic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as beneath a tree canopy.

i. *Inorganic mulch* – Inorganic mulch should not be used in highly-visible areas and should never be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Inorganic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as along a foundation wall where moisture retention is discouraged.

D. TREES

i. *Preservation*—Preserve and protect from damage existing mature trees and heritage trees. See UDC Section 35-523 (Tree Preservation) for specific requirements.

ii. *New Trees* – Select new trees based on site conditions. Avoid planting new trees in locations that could potentially cause damage to a historic structure or other historic elements. Species selection and planting procedure should be done in accordance with guidance from the City Arborist.

iii. *Maintenance* – Proper pruning encourages healthy growth and can extend the lifespan of trees. Avoid unnecessary or harmful pruning. A certified, licensed arborist is recommended for the pruning of mature trees and heritage trees.

4. Residential Streetscapes

A. PLANTING STRIPS

- i. *Street trees*—Protect and encourage healthy street trees in planting strips. Replace damaged or dead trees with trees of a similar species, size, and growth habit as recommended by the City Arborist.
- ii. *Lawns*—Maintain the use of traditional lawn in planting strips or low plantings where a consistent pattern has been retained along the block frontage. If mulch or gravel beds are used, low-growing plantings should be incorporated into the design.

- iii. *Alternative materials*—Do not introduce impervious hardscape, raised planting beds, or other materials into planting strips where they were not historically found.

B. PARKWAYS AND PLANTED MEDIANS

- i. *Historic plantings*—Maintain the park-like character of historic parkways and planted medians by preserving mature vegetation and retaining historic design elements. Replace damaged or dead plant materials with species of a like size, growth habit, and ornamental characteristics.
- ii. *Hardscape*—Do not introduce new pavers, concrete, or other hardscape materials into parkways and planted medians where they were not historically found.

C. STREET ELEMENTS

- i. *Site elements*—Preserve historic street lights, street markers, roundabouts, and other unique site elements found within the public right-of-way as street improvements and other public works projects are completed over time.
- ii. *Historic paving materials*—Retain historic paving materials, such as brick pavers or colored paving, within the public right-of-way and repair in place with like materials.

5. Sidewalks, Walkways, Driveways, and Curbing

A. SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

- i. *Maintenance*—Repair minor cracking, settling, or jamming along sidewalks to prevent uneven surfaces. Retain and repair historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials—often brick or concrete—in place.
- ii. *Replacement materials*—Replace those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair. Every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material.
- iii. *Width and alignment*—Follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways. Alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree.
- iv. *Stamped concrete*—Preserve stamped street names, business insignias, or other historic elements of sidewalks and walkways when replacement is necessary.
- v. *ADA compliance*—Limit removal of historic sidewalk materials to the immediate intersection when ramps are added to address ADA requirements.

B. DRIVEWAYS

- i. *Driveway configuration*—Retain and repair in place historic driveway configurations, such as ribbon drives. Incorporate a similar driveway configuration—materials, width, and design—to that historically found on the site. Historic driveways are typically no wider than 10 feet. Pervious paving surfaces may be considered where replacement is necessary to increase stormwater infiltration.
- ii. *Curb cuts and ramps*—Maintain the width and configuration of original curb cuts when replacing historic driveways. Avoid introducing new curb cuts where not historically found.

C. CURBING

- i. *Historic curbing*—Retain historic curbing wherever possible. Historic curbing in San Antonio is typically constructed of concrete with a curved or angular profile.
- ii. *Replacement curbing*—Replace curbing in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair. Where in-kind replacement is not be feasible, use a comparable substitute that duplicates the color, texture, durability, and profile of the original. Retaining walls and curbing should not be added to the sidewalk design unless absolutely necessary.

6. Non-Residential and Mixed Use Streetscapes

A. STREET FURNITURE

- i. *Historic street furniture*—Preserve historic site furnishings, including benches, lighting, tree grates, and other features.
- ii. *New furniture*—Use street furniture such as benches, trash receptors, tree grates, and tables that are simple in design and are compatible with the style and scale of adjacent buildings and outdoor spaces when historic furnishings do not exist.

B. STREET TREES

- i. *Street trees*—Protect and maintain existing street trees. Replace damaged or dead trees with trees of a similar species, size, and growth habit.

C. PAVING

i. *Maintenance and alterations*—Repair stone, masonry, or glass block pavers using in-kind materials whenever possible. Utilize similar materials that are compatible with the original in terms of composition, texture, color, and detail, when in-kind replacement is not possible.

D. LIGHTING

i. *General*—See UDC Section 35-392 for detailed lighting standards (height, shielding, illumination of uses, etc.).

ii. *Maintenance and alterations*—Preserve historic street lights in place and maintain through regular cleaning and repair as needed.

iii. *Pedestrian lighting*—Use appropriately scaled lighting for pedestrian walkways, such as short poles or light posts (bollards).

iv. *Shielding*—Direct light downward and shield light fixtures using cut-off shields to limit light spill onto adjacent properties.

v. *Safety lighting*—Install motion sensors that turn lights on and off automatically when safety or security is a concern. Locate these lighting fixtures as discreetly as possible on historic structures and avoid adding more fixtures than necessary.

FINDINGS:

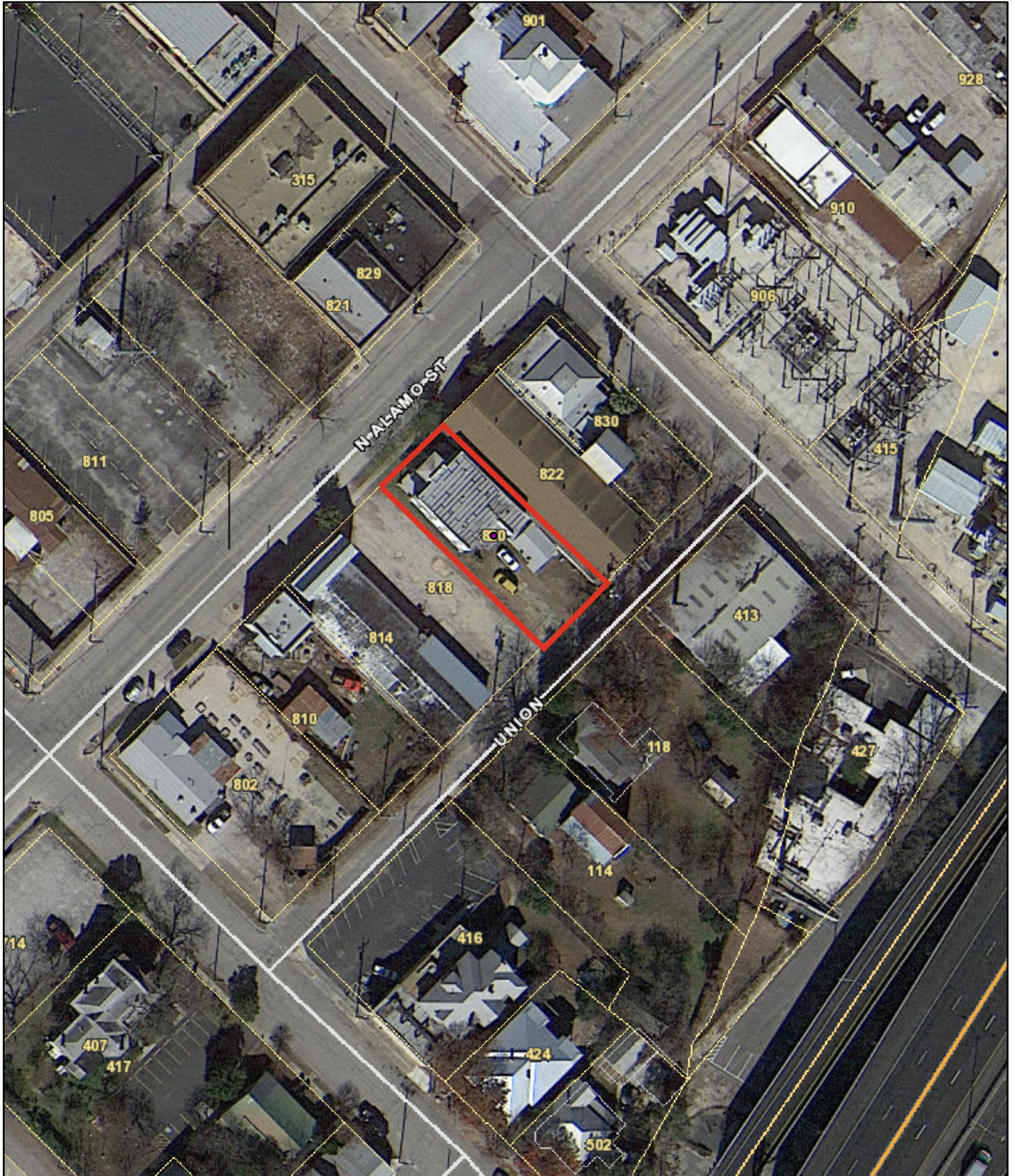
- a. The property at 820 N Alamo is a two-story Colonial Revival-style residence built in 1910 as La Casa Boarding House. The property first appears on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps in 1912 in the same footprint as it appears today. It faces northwest on a block bound to the northwest by N Alamo St, the southwest by 8th St, the southeast by Union St, and the northeast by 9th St. It has a two-story central porch supported by double-height columns and flanked by one-story covered porches with smaller columns with less ornate capitals. Prior to their removal, windows were one-over-one; the house is clad in wood waterfall siding. The flat roof has corniced eaves with dentils below the second-story form. The main entrance has double doors flanked by side lites and topped with a three-lite transom. The property is an individual landmark.
- b. PAVER INSTALLATION – The applicant has proposed to install brick pavers on either side of the front walkway and steps in the front yard in lieu of landscaping. Guideline 3.B.ii for Site Elements states that new pervious hardscapes should be limited to areas that are not highly visible, and should not be used as a wholesale replacement for plantings. If used, small planting should be incorporated into the design. Staff finds that the proposal is inconsistent with the Guidelines and that the applicant should modify the proposal to feature a combination of plantings and pavers.
- c. FRONT YARD FENCING – The applicant has requested to install a 4-foot-tall metal fence with horizontal railings in the front yard with a double pedestrian gate at the front walkway to comply with TABC requirements. Per Guideline 2.B.v for Site Elements, new fences should be constructed of 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. As the property is an individual landmark in a largely commercial context, staff finds the proposal appropriate.
- d. FRONT WALKWAY REPLACEMENT – The applicant has proposed to replace the existing concrete front walkway with an 8-foot-wide concrete front walkway. Guideline 5.A.iii for Site Elements states that replacement walkways should follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways. Alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree. Historic walkways typically do not exceed 4 feet in width. Staff finds that the replacement front walkway should match the existing front walkway in location, footprint, width, configuration, and material.

RECOMMENDATION:

Items 1 and 2, staff recommends approval based on findings a through d with the following stipulations:

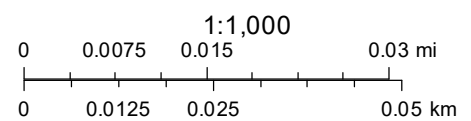
- i. That the applicant updates the proposed front yard modifications to feature a combination of small plantings and pavers based on finding b. An updated site plan and material specifications must be submitted to staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- ii. That the final construction height of the approved gate and fencing may not exceed the maximum height of 4 feet as approved by the HDRC at any portion of the fence. Additionally, the gate and fencing must be permitted and meet the development standards outlined in UDC Section 35-514.
- iii. That the replacement walkway matches the existing walkway in location, footprint, width, configuration, and material based on finding d. The applicant is required to submit an updated measured site plan to staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

City of San Antonio One Stop



July 12, 2024

— User drawn lines



LOCATION FOR BIKE RACK

REPLACE WITH
MATCHING EXISTING
SIDEWALK WIDTHLOCATION FOR
ORNAMENTAL TREE

2" MAX. STONE

REPLACE
FLATWORK, MATCH 8'
WIDTH OF SIDEWALK42" DOUBLE GATE TO
MATCH BLDG (REMAINS
OPEN DURING BIZ)NORTH ALAMO STR
(72.0' R.O.W.)BENCHMARK #1
SET 60D NAIL
ELEV: 666.00LOCATION FOR
ORNAMENTAL TREE

2" MAX. STONE

42" RAILING / FENCE TO
MATCH BLDG

EXIST. 6" CURB & ASPHALT STREET

CONCRETE
SIDEWALKEXIST. 4" CONCRETE
SIDEWALK

BR"

COVERED
PORCHBRICK PAVER,
PATTERN TBDFINISHED FLOOR
668.84BRICK PAVER,
PATTERN TBDLOT 6, BLOCK 30
N.C.B. 452
0.149 ACRESEXISTING
COMMERCIAL
BUILDINGFINISHED FLOOR
668.64NG
666.33NG
666.74NG
666.92DEMOLISH EXISTING SIDEWALK AND
CONSTRUCT SIDEWALK TO MATCH EXISTING
(CONTRACTOR TO MEET WITH CITY
INSPECTOR TO DETERMINE OPTION)68.4 LF 3.60' WIDE CONCRETE SIDEWALK
ADA ROUTE WITH 6" CURB (NO HANDRAILS)

EXISTING PARKING L

666.5

59.40'

GRAVEL

2.8'

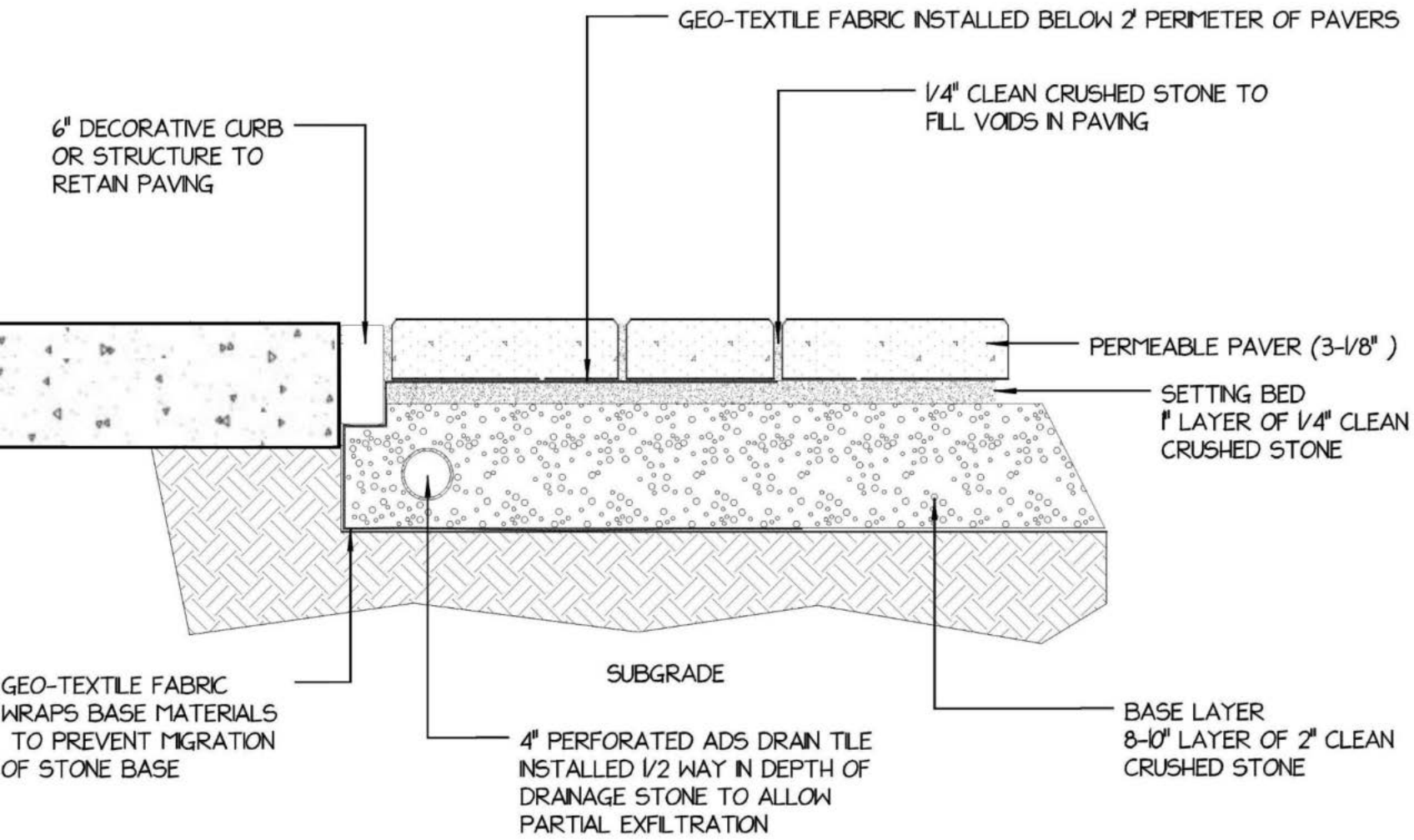
14.28'

12.08'

26.17'

46.87'

3.6'

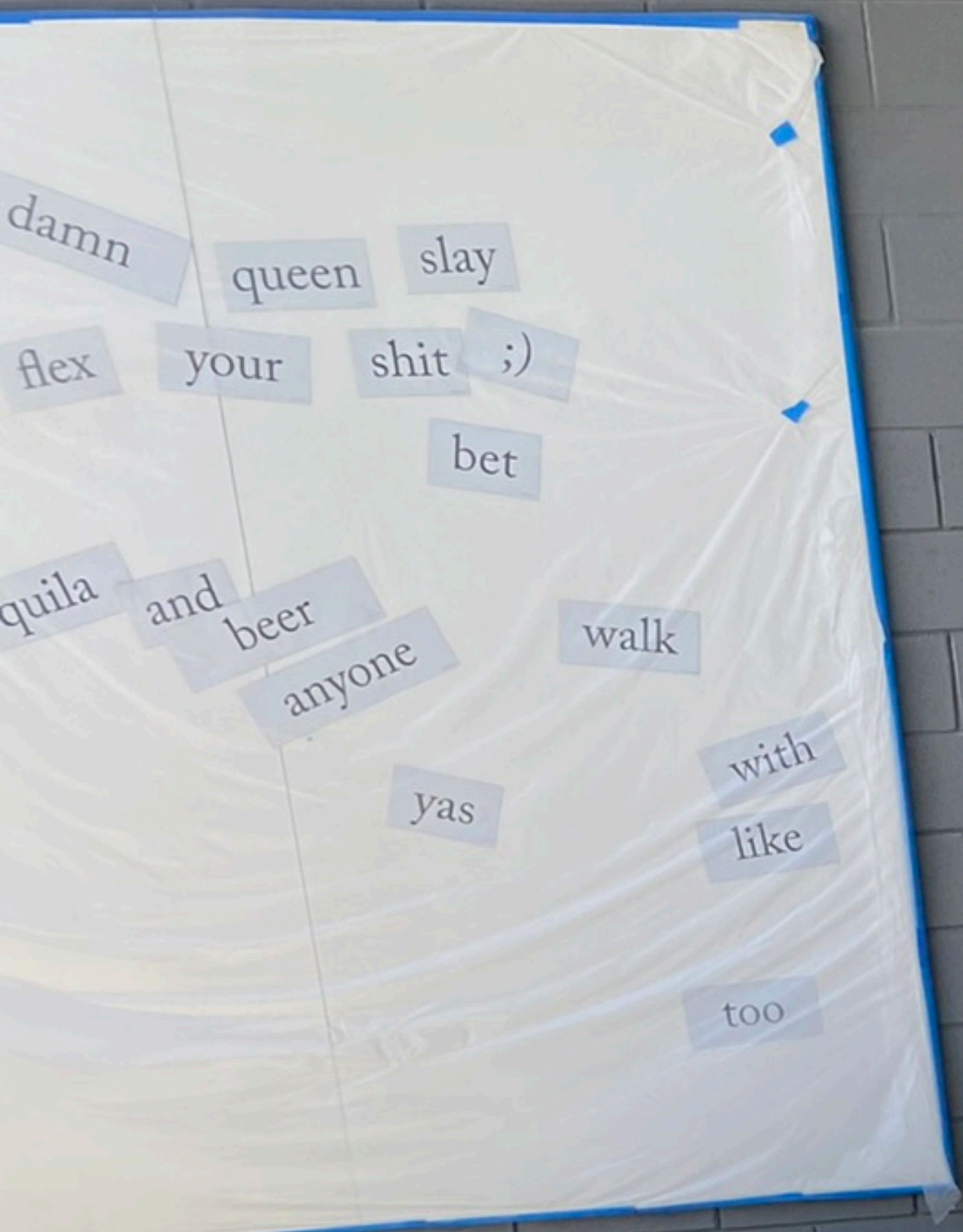












EXIT





