

**HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW
COMPLIANCE AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD
May 17, 2024**

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-173
ADDRESS: 515 WICKES
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 2916 BLK 5 LOT 16
ZONING: RM-4, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: King William Historic District
APPLICANT: Rebecca Clausewitz
OWNER: CLAUSEWITZ REBECCA
TYPE OF WORK: Retaining wall installation and landscape modifications
APPLICATION RECEIVED: April 29, 2024
60-DAY REVIEW: June 28, 2024

REQUEST:

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

1. Construct a concrete-finish retaining wall.
2. Regrade the front yard; create level surface at top of new wall.
3. Construct concrete-finish planters along the southern and eastern façade's foundation skirting.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 2, Exterior Maintenance and Alterations

1. Materials: Woodwork

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

- i. *Inspections*—Conduct semi-annual inspections of all exterior wood elements to verify condition and determine maintenance needs.
- ii. *Cleaning*—Clean exterior surfaces annually with mild household cleaners and water. Avoid using high pressure power washing and any abrasive cleaning or stripping methods that can damage the historic wood siding and detailing.
- iii. *Paint preparation*—Remove peeling, flaking, or failing paint surfaces from historic woodwork using the gentlest means possible to protect the integrity of the historic wood surface. Acceptable methods for paint removal include scraping and sanding, thermal removal, and when necessary, mild chemical strippers. Sand blasting and water blasting should never be used to remove paint from any surface. Sand only to the next sound level of paint, not all the way to the wood, and address any moisture and deterioration issues before repainting.
- iv. *Repainting*—Paint once the surface is clean and dry using a paint type that will adhere to the surface properly. See *General Paint Type Recommendations* in Preservation Brief #10 listed under Additional Resources for more information.
- v. *Repair*—Repair deteriorated areas or refasten loose elements with an exterior wood filler, epoxy, or glue.

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

- i. *Façade materials*—Avoid removing materials that are in good condition or that can be repaired in place. Consider exposing original wood siding if it is currently covered with vinyl or aluminum siding, stucco, or other materials that have not achieved historic significance.
- ii. *Materials*—Use in-kind materials when possible or materials similar in size, scale, and character when exterior woodwork is beyond repair. Ensure replacement siding is installed to match the original pattern, including exposures. Do not introduce modern materials that can accelerate and hide deterioration of historic materials. Hardiboard and other cementitious materials are not recommended.
- iii. *Replacement elements*—Replace wood elements in-kind as a replacement for existing wood siding, matching in profile, dimensions, material, and finish, when beyond repair.

2. Materials: Masonry and Stucco

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

- i. *Paint*—Avoid painting historically unpainted surfaces. Exceptions may be made for severely deteriorated material where other consolidation or stabilization methods are not appropriate. When painting is acceptable, utilize a water permeable paint to avoid trapping water within the masonry.

- ii. *Clear area*—Keep the area where masonry or stucco meets the ground clear of water, moisture, and vegetation.
 - iii. *Vegetation*—Avoid allowing ivy or other vegetation to grow on masonry or stucco walls, as it may loosen mortar and stucco and increase trapped moisture.
 - iv. *Cleaning*—Use the gentlest means possible to clean masonry and stucco when needed, as improper cleaning can damage the surface. Avoid the use of any abrasive, strong chemical, sandblasting, or high-pressure cleaning method.
- B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)**
- i. *Patching*—Repair masonry or stucco by patching or replacing it with in-kind materials whenever possible. Utilize similar materials that are compatible with the original in terms of composition, texture, application technique, color, and detail, when in-kind replacement is not possible. EIFS is not an appropriate patching or replacement material for stucco.
 - ii. *Repointing*—The removal of old or deteriorated mortar should be done carefully by a professional to ensure that masonry units are not damaged in the process. Use mortar that matches the original in color, profile, and composition when repointing. Incompatible mortar can exceed the strength of historic masonry and results in deterioration. Ensure that the new joint matches the profile of the old joint when viewed in section. It is recommended that a test panel is prepared to ensure the mortar is the right strength and color.
 - iii. *Removing paint*—Take care when removing paint from masonry as the paint may be providing a protectant layer or hiding modifications to the building. Use the gentlest means possible, such as alkaline poultice cleaners and strippers, to remove paint from masonry.
 - iv. *Removing stucco*—Remove stucco from masonry surfaces where it is historically inappropriate. Prepare a test panel to ensure that underlying masonry has not been irreversibly damaged before proceeding.

7. Architectural Features: Porches, Balconies, and Porte-Cocheres

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

- i. *Existing porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres*—Preserve porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres. Do not add new porches, balconies, or porte-cocheres where not historically present.
- ii. *Balusters*—Preserve existing balusters. When replacement is necessary, replace in-kind when possible or with balusters that match the originals in terms of materials, spacing, profile, dimension, finish, and height of the railing.
- iii. *Floors*—Preserve original wood or concrete porch floors. Do not cover original porch floors of wood or concrete with carpet, tile, or other materials unless they were used historically.

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

- i. *Front porches*—Refrain from enclosing front porches. Approved screen panels should be simple in design as to not change the character of the structure or the historic fabric.
- ii. *Side and rear porches*—Refrain from enclosing side and rear porches, particularly when connected to the main porch or balcony. Original architectural details should not be obscured by any screening or enclosure materials. Alterations to side and rear porches should result in a space that functions, and is visually interpreted as, a porch.
- iii. *Replacement*—Replace in-kind porches, balconies, porte-cocheres, and related elements, such as ceilings, floors, and columns, when such features are deteriorated beyond repair. When in-kind replacement is not feasible, the design should be compatible in scale, massing, and detail while materials should match in color, texture, dimensions, and finish.
- iv. *Adding elements*—Design replacement elements, such as stairs, to be simple so as to not distract from the historic character of the building. Do not add new elements and details that create a false historic appearance.
- v. *Reconstruction*—Reconstruct porches, balconies, and porte-cocheres based on accurate evidence of the original, such as photographs. If no such evidence exists, the design should be based on the architectural style of the building and historic patterns.

8. Architectural Features: Foundations

A. MAINTENANCE (PRESERVATION)

- i. *Details*—Preserve the height, proportion, exposure, form, and details of a foundation such as decorative vents, grilles, and lattice work.
- ii. *Ventilation*—Ensure foundations are vented to control moisture underneath the dwelling, preventing deterioration.
- iii. *Drainage*—Ensure downspouts are directed away and soil is sloped away from the foundation to avoid moisture collection near the foundation.
- iv. *Repair*—Inspect foundations regularly for sufficient drainage and ventilation, keeping it clear of vegetation. Also inspect for deteriorated materials such as limestone and repair accordingly. Refer to maintenance and alteration of applicable materials, for additional guidelines.

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

- i. *Replacement features*—Ensure that features such as decorative vents and grilles and lattice panels are replaced in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair. When in-kind replacement is not possible, use features matching in size, material, and

design. Replacement skirting should consist of durable, proven materials, and should either match the existing siding or be applied to have minimal visual impact.

ii. *Alternative materials*—Cedar piers may be replaced with concrete piers if they are deteriorated beyond repair.

iii. *Shoring*—Provide proper support of the structure while the foundation is rebuilt or repaired.

iv. *New utilities*—Avoid placing new utility and mechanical connections through the foundation along the primary façade or where visible from the public right-of-way.

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.

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.

FINDINGS:

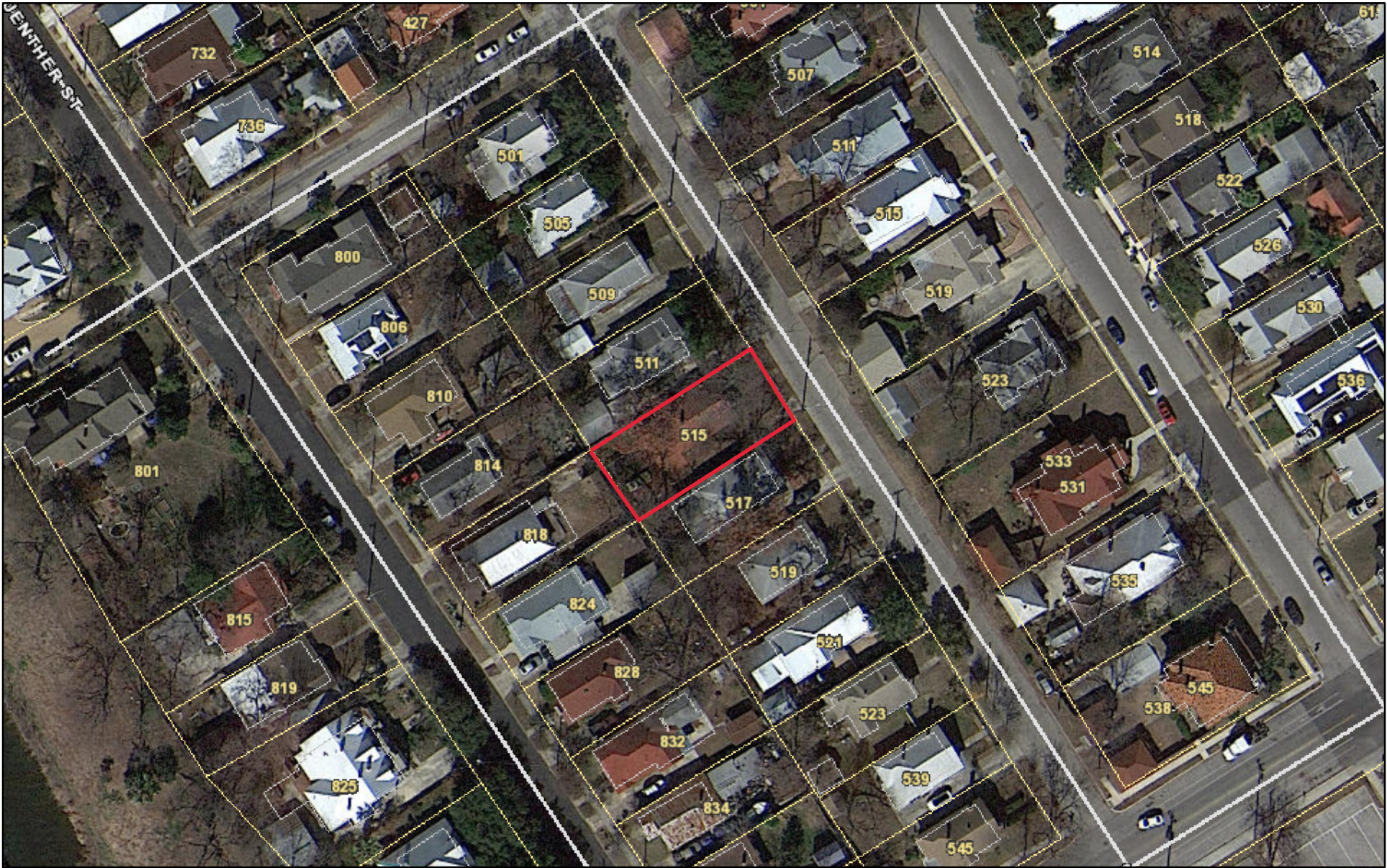
- a. The primary structure located at 515 Wickes is a 2-story, single-family residence constructed circa 1919 in the Craftsman style and first appears on the 1931 Sanborn map. The building features a standing seam metal roof with a prominent front-facing gable, a brick chimney, and decorative wood window screens. This property contributes to the King William Historic District.
- b. VIOLATION – On March 1, 2024, staff observed work occurring on the property without a Certificate of Appropriateness. Staff discussed the project with the driveway contractor onsite and he stated that the property owner, had all COAs and permits for the scopes of work observed. Staff contacted the property owner via phone call and let her know of the violations observed and issued a Stop Work Order the same day. Violations include planter box construction; porch steps and walkway steps replacement; and retaining wall construction.
- c. CASE HISTORY – This property received final approval from the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) on April 7, 2021, for the construction of a second-story addition and rear garage, porch repair, and walkway replacement. On March 22, 2024, the Compliance and Technical Advisory Board (CTAB) denied the applicant's request for the construction of a concrete-finish retaining wall and planters and concrete walkway and porch step replacement.
- d. NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT – The structures located at 515 Wickes, 511 Wickes, 509 Wickes, 505 Wickes, and 501 Wickes within the King William Historic District are all similar in design and have historically featured four-foot-wide concrete walkways, concrete walkway steps from the public sidewalk, and berms without retaining walls.
- e. RETAINING WALL CONSTRUCTION – The applicant is requesting approval to construct an approximately twelve-inch concrete-finish retaining wall at the front yard. Site Elements 2.B.i. states new fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character and that the design of the fence or wall should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure. Site Elements 2.B.ii. states to avoid installing a fence or wall where one did not historically exist, particularly within the front yard; however, the appropriateness of a front yard fence or wall is dependent on conditions within a specific district. Site Elements 2.B.iii. states to limit the height of new fences and walls within the front yard to a maximum of four feet and the height of a new retaining wall should not exceed the height of the slope it retains. Staff finds the construction of the proposed retaining wall generally appropriate.
- f. REGRADING – The applicant is requesting to regrade the front yard to create a level surface with the retaining wall. Site Elements 1.A.i. states to avoid significantly altering the topography of a property, to not alter character-defining features such as berms or sloped front lawns that help define the character of the public right-of-way, and to maintain the established lawn to 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. Staff finds the regrading of the front yard generally appropriate.
- g. PLANTER BOX CONSTRUCTION – The applicant is requesting approval to construct concrete-finish planters along the eastern and southern façade's foundation skirting measuring approximately twelve inches in height. The Historic Design Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 8.A.iv. states to inspect foundations regularly for sufficient drainage and ventilation, keeping it clear of vegetation. Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 8.B.i.

states to ensure features such as decorative vents and grills and lattice panels are replaced in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair and, when in-kind replacement is not possible, to use features matching in size, material, and design. The introduction of the stone material is suburban in nature and obscures the original skirting detail. Staff finds the construction of concrete-finish planters along the structure's foundation skirting generally appropriate.

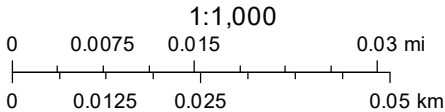
RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of items 1 through 3, based on findings a through g.

City of San Antonio One Stop



March 14, 2024





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Proposed
changes







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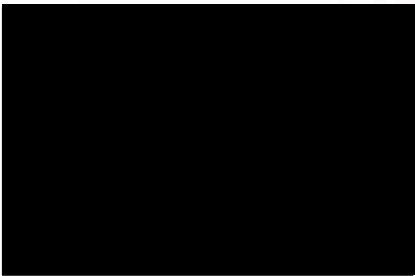
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Invoice

Invoice No.: [Redacted]

Invoice Date: [Redacted]

GF Number

Buyer

515 Wickes Street

Title Company

Ordered By [Redacted]

| DESCRIPTION | AMOUNT |
|-------------|------------|
| Land Survey | [Redacted] |
| Tax | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | |

