

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

September 6, 2023

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2023-356  
**ADDRESS:** 446 E HILDEBRAND AVE  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 6817 BLK 4 LOT 14  
**ZONING:** R-5, H  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**DISTRICT:** Monte Vista Historic District  
**APPLICANT:** Phil Solomon | Phil Solomon Inc.  
**OWNER:** Patrick Shea  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Driveway, curb cut, landscaping, hardscaping, and wall modifications  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** August 16, 2023  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** October 15, 2023  
**CASE MANAGER:** Bryan Morales

### REQUEST:

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

1. Modify the existing driveway with curbing and curb cut.
2. Install a retaining wall.
3. Modify the existing landscape.
4. Modify the existing hardscape.
5. Remove an existing wall.

### 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.

### 7. Off-Street Parking

#### A. LOCATION

i. *Preferred location*—Place parking areas for non-residential and mixed-use structures at the rear of the site, behind primary structures to hide them from the public right-of-way. On corner lots, place parking areas behind the primary structure and set them back as far as possible from the side streets. Parking areas to the side of the primary structure are acceptable when location behind the structure is not feasible. See UDC Section 35-310 for district-specific standards.

ii. *Front*—Do not add off-street parking areas within the front yard setback as to not disrupt the continuity of the streetscape.

iii. *Access*—Design off-street parking areas to be accessed from alleys or secondary streets rather than from principal streets whenever possible.

#### B. DESIGN

- i. *Screening*—Screen off-street parking areas with a landscape buffer, wall, or ornamental fence two to four feet high—or a combination of these methods. Landscape buffers are preferred due to their ability to absorb carbon dioxide. See UDC Section 35-510 for buffer requirements.
- ii. *Materials*—Use permeable parking surfaces when possible to reduce run-off and flooding. See UDC Section 35-526(j) for specific standards.
- iii. *Parking structures*—Design new parking structures to be similar in scale, materials, and rhythm of the surrounding historic district when new parking structures are necessary.

*Xeriscaping & Responsible Landscaping: City of San Antonio Historic Design Guidelines Landscaping Policy Document*

**THE DO NOT'S**

- Do not develop proposals that remove over 50% of the total green space in the front yard.
- Do not fully remove plants from the planting strip (the space between the sidewalk and street). Retaining at least 50% plantings in this area is highly encouraged to reduce the heat island, aid in rainwater absorption on streets, and create a lively pedestrian experience.
- Do not utilize gravel, decomposed granite, or other small rock ground cover as the primary element of your landscaping plan.
- Do not incorporate black, non-native, or artificially colored rocks.
- Do not incorporate rock ground cover with an overall diameter of greater than 2 inches.
- Do not incorporate large boulders or flagstone as accent pieces. Consider integrating drought-tolerant trees or low shrubbery instead to add visual diversity and interest.
- Do not incorporate excessive use of concrete or impervious (non-permeable) hardscaping. Hardscaping is best for functional purposes only: driveways, walkways, steps, and patios.

**FINDINGS:**

- a. The property located at 446 E Hildebrand Ave is a two-story, Italian Renaissance Revival single-family residence and first appears on the 1955 Historic Aerials map. The structure features an east-to-west tile gabled roof, one-over-one wood windows, a front facing gabled porch entry way, and stone cladding. This property contributes to the Monte Vista Historic District.
- b. **PROPERTY LOCATION AND CONTEXT** – The property faces E Hildebrand Avenue and has its driveway access on the same street. E Hildebrand Avenue is an arterial street in San Antonio and the northern boundary of the Monte Vista Historic District. Properties facing E Hildebrand Avenue frequently feature wider driveways, aprons, and curb cuts and include circular driveways with front yard parking.
- c. **DRIVEWAY MODIFICATIONS** – The applicant is requesting approval to modify the existing 11'6" wide asphalt driveway by extending the width to 14' and adding a hammerhead design in the front yard consisting of asphalt and gravel. The Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements 1.A.iii. states to minimize changes in topography resulting from new elements, like driveways and walkways, through appropriate siting and design. Site Elements 5.B.i. states to retain and repair in place historic driveway configurations and to incorporate a similar driveway configuration – materials, width, and design – to that historically found on the site, that historic driveways are typically no wider than ten feet, and that pervious paving surfaces may be considered where replacement is necessary to increase stormwater infiltration. Staff finds the driveway width increase from 11'6" to 14' and the introduction of the hammerhead design using asphalt and gravel, as shown by the site plan, generally appropriate.
- d. **DRIVEWAY MODIFICATIONS (FRONT PARKING PAD)** – The applicant is requesting approval to incorporate a pervious parking pad in the front yard. Site Elements 7.A.ii. states to not add off-street parking areas within the front yard setback as to not disrupt the continuity of the streetscape. Staff finds the incorporation of a pervious parking pad within the front yard driveway design generally appropriate given the property's site conditions.
- e. **CURB CUT MODIFICATIONS** – The applicant is requesting approval to increase the width of the existing curb cut from 18' to 26'. Site Elements 5.B.ii. states to maintain the width and configuration of original curb cuts when replacing historic driveways. Staff finds the increase of the curb cut from 18' to 26' generally appropriate.
- f. **RETAINING WALL INSTALLATION** – The applicant is requesting to install a retaining wall along the proposed driveway modifications to match the existing wall measuring 16" in height and to install a retaining wall within the front yard. 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; however, the height of a new retaining wall should not exceed the height of the slope it retains. Staff finds the installation of the retaining walls generally conforms to guidelines.
- g. **LANDSCAPING MODIFICATIONS** – The applicant is requesting approval to add natural greenery and a rock drainage channel toward the sidewalk. Site Elements 3.A.ii. states that historic lawn areas should never be reduced by

more than 50%. The Xeriscaping and Responsible Landscaping policy document states to not incorporate black, non-native, or artificially colored rocks and to not incorporate rock ground cover with an overall diameter of greater than 2 inches. Staff finds the landscape modifications generally appropriate. Staff finds the inclusion of the rock drainage channel generally appropriate; however, rocks should not measure greater than 2 inches and be native and natural in color.

- h. **HARDSCAPING MODIFICATIONS** – The applicant is requesting to remove the existing brick walkways and the concrete walkway in the front yard and replace with stone paths and a flagstone walkway approaching the front door. Site Elements 5.A.ii. states that every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material. Site Elements 5.A.iii. states to alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree. Staff finds the removal of the existing brick walkways and the concrete walkway to install stone paths and a flagstone walkway generally appropriate.
- i. **WALL REMOVAL** – The applicant is requesting to remove portions of the wall running north-to-south along the existing driveway to accommodate the proposed driveway design. Site Elements 2.A.i. states to retain historic fences and walls. Historic Aerials of the property dating to 1955 are inconclusive as to the date of construction for the wall. Staff finds the removal of the wall generally appropriate.

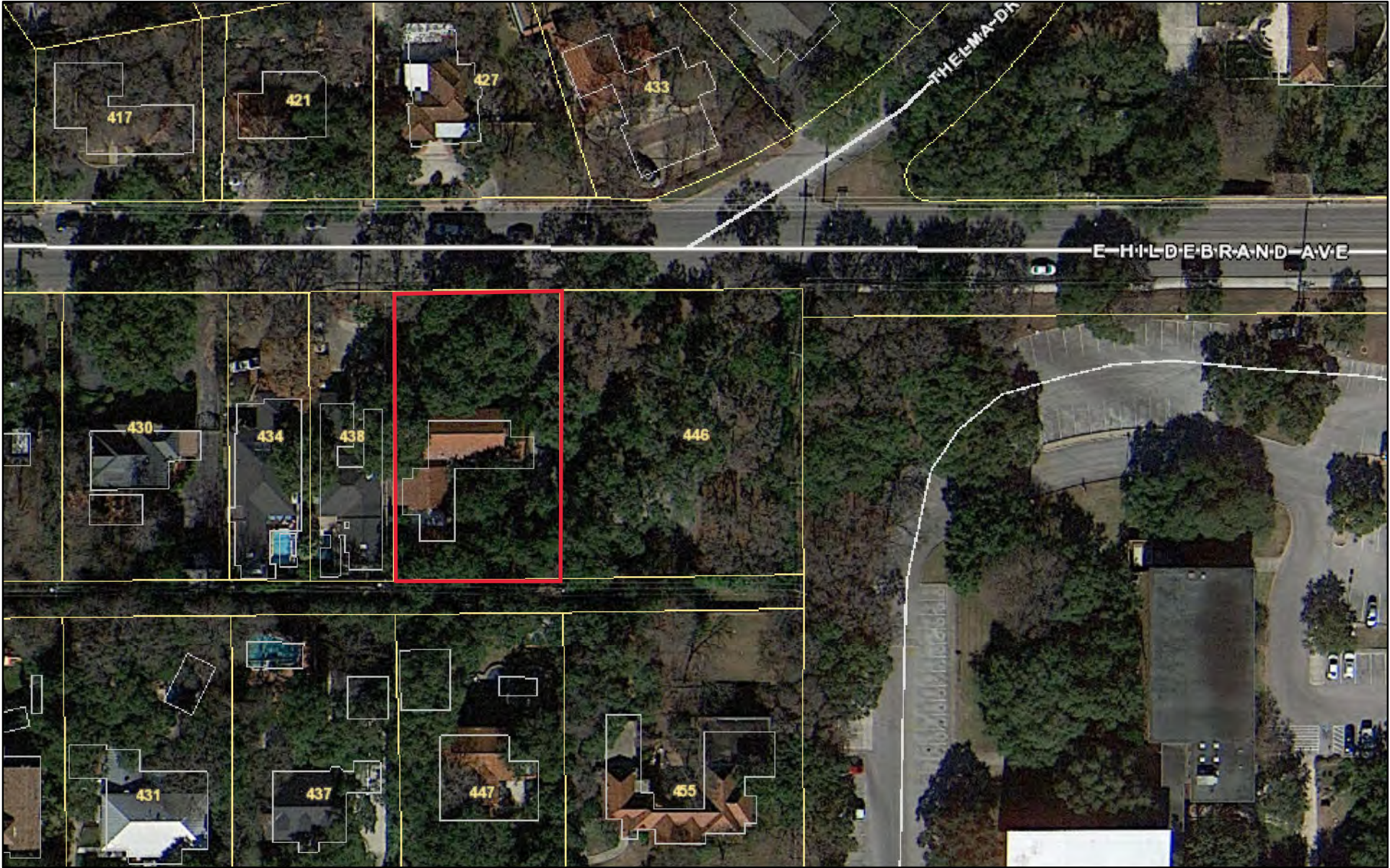
### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of items 1 through 5, based on findings a through g, with the following stipulations:

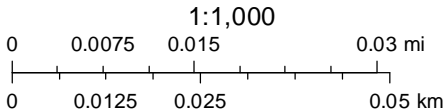
- i. That the applicant use a natural color for the proposed gravel portion of the driveway.
- ii. That any retaining wall introduced to the property follows the natural slope of the topography and does not exceed 4 feet in height.
- iii. That the applicant use landscaping rocks natural in color, native to the area, and does not exceed 2 inches in size on the property.



City of San Antonio One Stop



September 1, 2023





RESIDENCE

NOTE:  
REMOVE  
ASPHALT

CONTINUE  
NEW ASPHALT  
TO GARAGE

EXISTING  
WALL  
STEP

STONE  
STEPS

NEW  
FLAGSTONE  
STEPS  
W/ CONCRETE  
EX TREE

EX  
SLAB  
BELOW

REDBUD

STEP  
STONES  
TO  
GATE

SOFT  
CURB  
3 1/2" TALL

TRANSITION  
TO EXISTING  
WALL

NEW WALL  
R=6

MATCH  
WALL

FLAT  
CURB

LEVEL -24"

FLAT  
CURB

FLAT

START  
RAISED

2-CAR PARKING

GRAVEL  
DRIVEWAY

CURB  
RAISED 4" TALL  
16" WIDE

X 88'

SLOPE

BACK OUT

DRAINAGE

3 1/2" SOFT  
CURB

STONE  
WALL

OPEN

15'-0"

RIP  
RAP

DRAINAGE

SOFT  
CURB  
3 1/2" TALL

PROPERTY  
LINE

EXISTING  
PRIMROSE REMAINS

EXISTING  
STONE WALL 24" HIGH

EX SIDEWALK

EXISTING  
APPROACH

FACE OF CURB

SC: 1/4" = 1'-0"

NEW DRIVEWAY DESIGN: MR & MRS. SHEA

23'-0"

20%  
UP

RISE  
X 89'

14'-0"

EXISTING WALL 16" TALL

NEW 16"  
WALL TO  
MATCH

NEW  
APPROACH (EXTENDED)

TRANSITION  
TO EXISTING WALL

SMALL DOWDED WALL  
TO SLOW DOWN WATER

EX WALL

MATCH EXISTING

NEW MODIFIED  
WALL TO

NEW WALL

SOFT  
CURB

VAR. GINGER

EXISTING  
LARGE OAK

ROOT  
FLARES

START  
CURB 4"

SOFT  
CURB

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NOTE:  
REMOVE  
ASPHALT  
&  
CONTINUE  
NEW CONCRETE  
TO GARAGE

FLAT

EXISTING  
WALL

MEET  
EXISTING  
GRADE

EXISTING  
WALL

14' 0" NEW

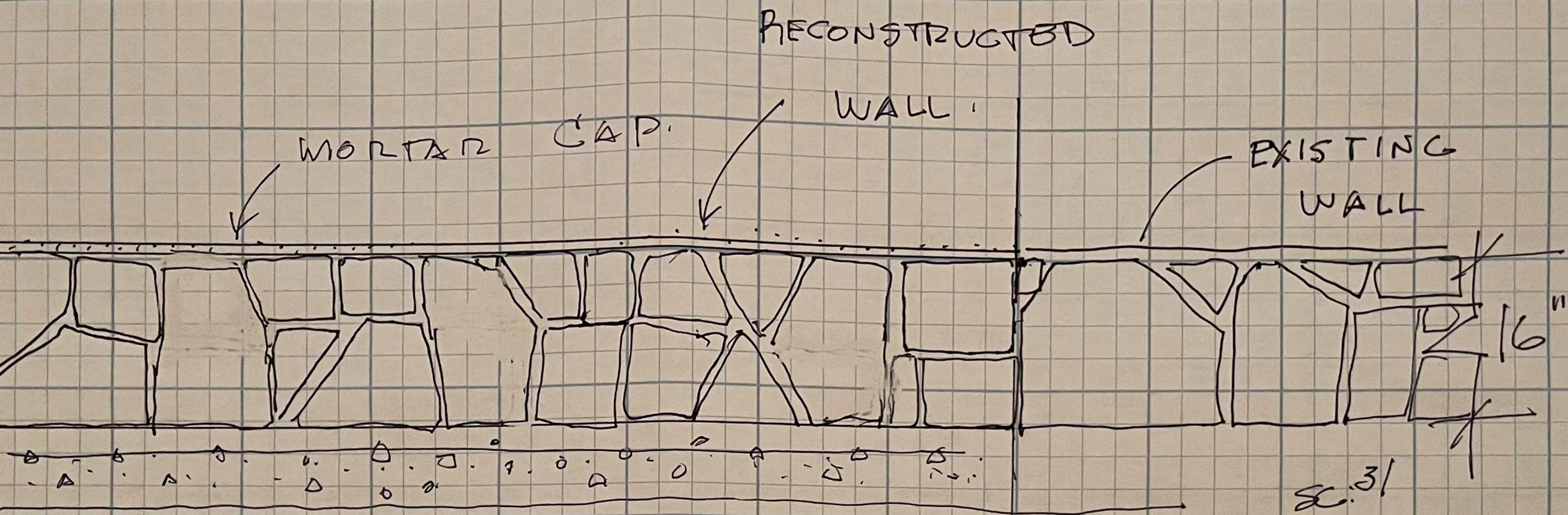
PROPERTY  
LINE

EXISTING  
APPROACH

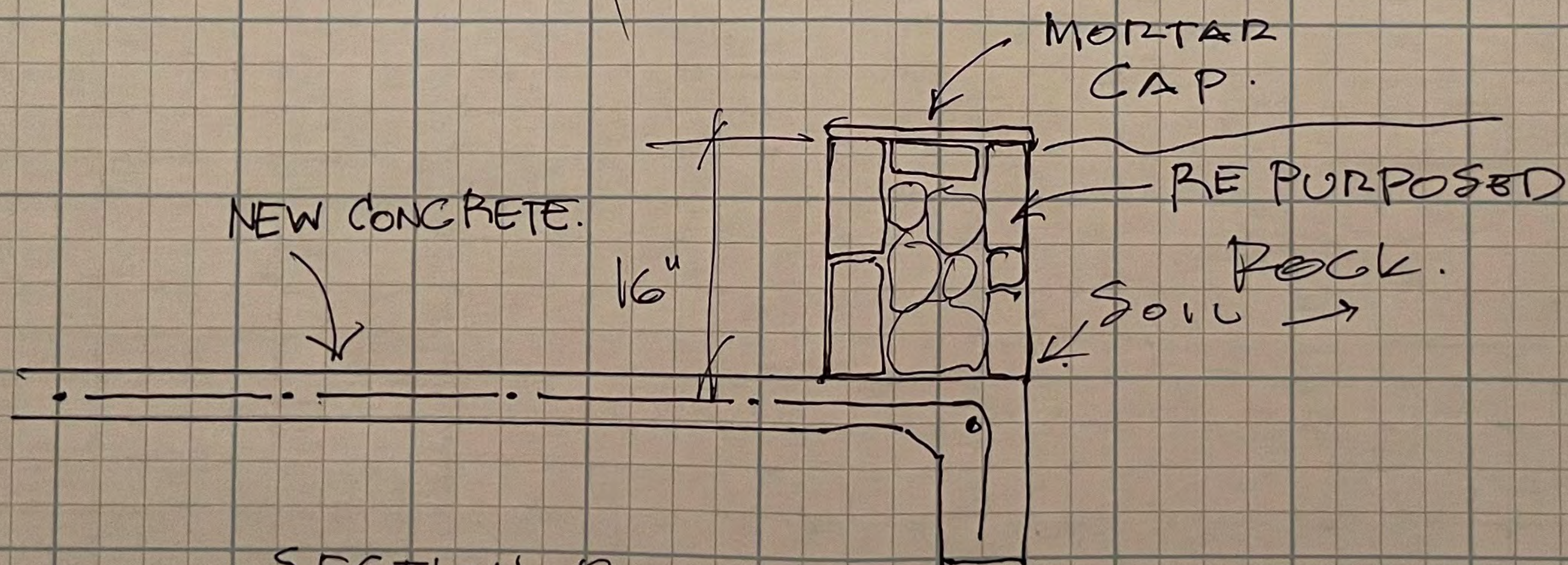
± ROLL CURB 18'

NEW APPROACH  
± ROLL CURB - 26'





ELEVATION: RECONSTRUCTED WALL TO MATCH EXISTING



SECTION @

DRIVEWAY. SC: 3/4" = 140"



















































## Jessica L. Anderson (OHP)

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**From:** Phil Solomon [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 20, 2023 6:36 PM  
**To:** Jessica L. Anderson (OHP)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] current photos of existing walls and site conditions

**\*\*THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER OUTSIDE OF THE CITY.\*\***

Be cautious before clicking links or opening attachments from unknown sources. Do not provide personal or confidential information.



wall on left side to remain , wall on right side to deconstructed and reconstructed same height and style



wall to be deconstructed and reconstructed exactly the same





small tree in photo to be removed



small tree ( 14" live oak to be removed)



area where new parking hammer-head  
is proposed  
Sent from my iPhone



## Bryan Morales (OHP)

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**From:** Phil Solomon [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 29, 2023 2:02 PM  
**To:** Bryan Morales (OHP)  
**Cc:** patrick.shea [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Adjacent properties and existing driveways on E Hildebrand - south side street

Neighboring Driveways ,

**\*\*THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER OUTSIDE OF THE CITY.\*\***

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430 E Hildebrand -28' approach opening at face of curb cut, 14 ' driveway width with asphalt



434E Hildebrand. -32' approach opening at face of curb cut - pebble concrete





422 E Hildebrand - 24' approach opening at  
face of curb cut - use of gravel for driveway material - broom finish concrete on approach



434 E Hildebrand - transition to city sidewalk  
Sent from my iPhone



+ 446 e hildebrand ave san antonio texa

go



← purchase image and/or print



Tweet

aerials 2020

1955 2018

topos 2016

atlases 2014

2012

compare 2010

overlays 2008

measure 2004



1995

1986

1983

1973

1966

1963

1955

50 m

100 ft

29.46486 -98.48598

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