

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW
COMPLIANCE AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD
March 22, 2024

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-102
ADDRESS: 677 E WOODLAWN AVE
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 6200 BLK 1 LOT 18 & SW 20 FT OF 19
ZONING: R-4, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: River Road Historic District
APPLICANT: Chris Christal
OWNER: CHRISTAL SARAH E & CHRISTOPHER D
TYPE OF WORK: Retaining walls installation
APPLICATION RECEIVED: March 4, 2024
60-DAY REVIEW: May 3, 2024
CASE MANAGER: Bryan Morales

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to construct two retaining walls at the front yard.

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.

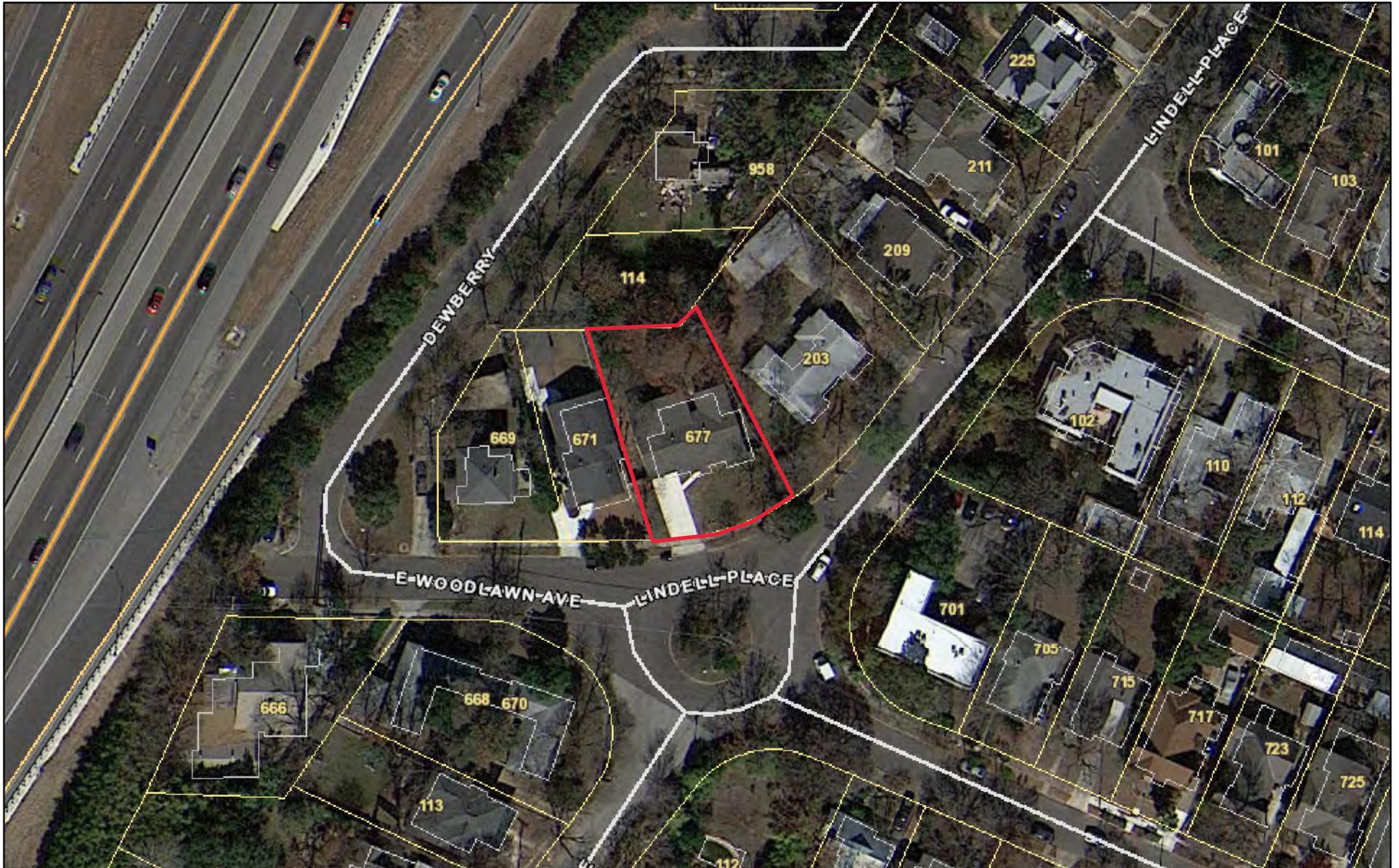
FINDINGS:

- a. The property located at 677 E Woodlawn is a one-story, single-family Modern Ranch style structure constructed c. 1963 and first appears in the 1963 Historic Aerials map. The structure features a horizontal wood porch screen, a cross-gable composition shingle roof, and a built-in single-car garage. This property contributes to the River Road Historic District. River Road features an eclectic mix of yard styles and types, some with stone retaining walls and gardens.
- b. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL – The applicant received administrative approval for the modifications to the existing landscape including the installation of decomposed granite, pavers, and new plantings on March 12, 2024. The landscape elements shown in the case file have received administrative approval and are not a part of the current request to the CTAB.
- c. RETAINING WALL (WEST) – The applicant is requesting approval to install a U-shaped limestone retaining wall at the front yard’s western section. The retaining wall will measure eighteen feet in length at the west, twelve feet in length at the south, and eleven feet in length at the east. The retaining wall will measure eighteen inches in height with a limestone block construction, a concrete foundation, and downlights. The Historic Design Guidelines for 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 western limestone retaining wall generally appropriate due to the context of the River Road Historic District.
- d. RETAINING WALL (EAST) – The applicant is requesting approval to install a U-shaped limestone retaining wall at the front yard’s eastern section. The retaining wall will measure fourteen feet in length at the west, fifty-four feet in length at the south, and fourteen feet in length at the east. The retaining wall will measure eighteen inches in height with a limestone block construction, a concrete foundation, and downlights. 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 eastern limestone retaining wall generally appropriate due to the context of the River Road Historic District.

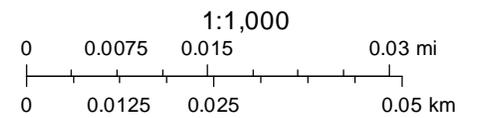
RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the request, based on findings a through d, with the stipulation that the height of the wall not exceed the height of the slope it is intended to retain. For instance, walls located along the property lines should be terminated at the existing grade. The entirety of the wall must be fully level.

City of San Antonio One Stop

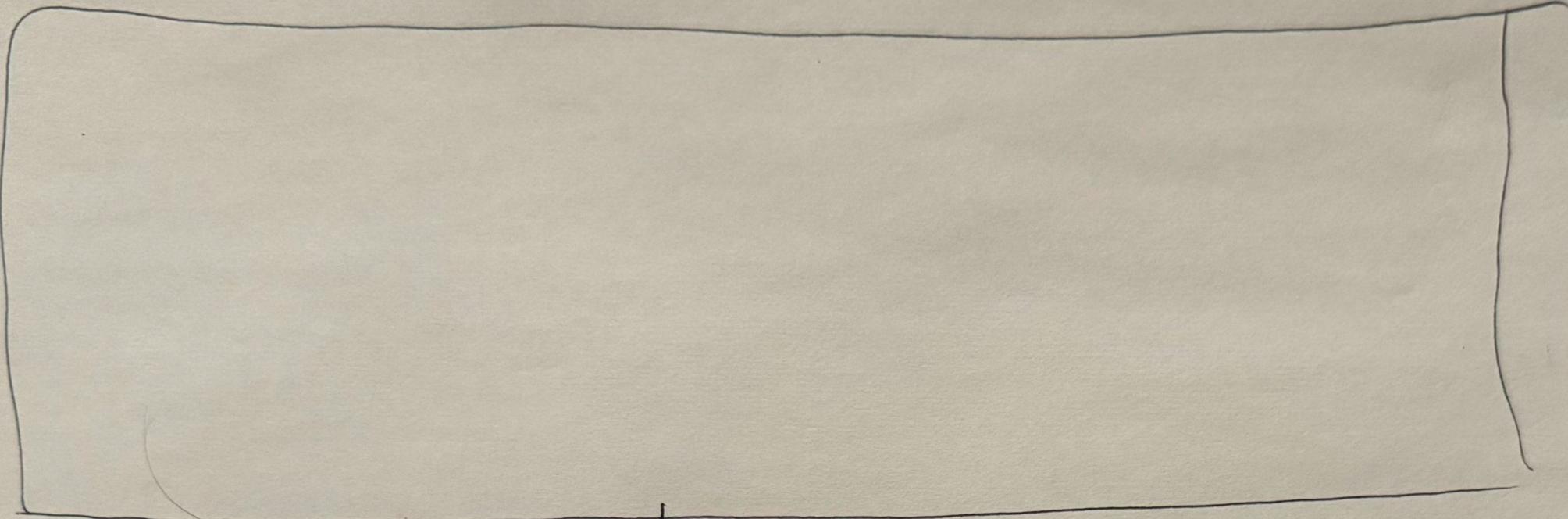


March 14, 2024



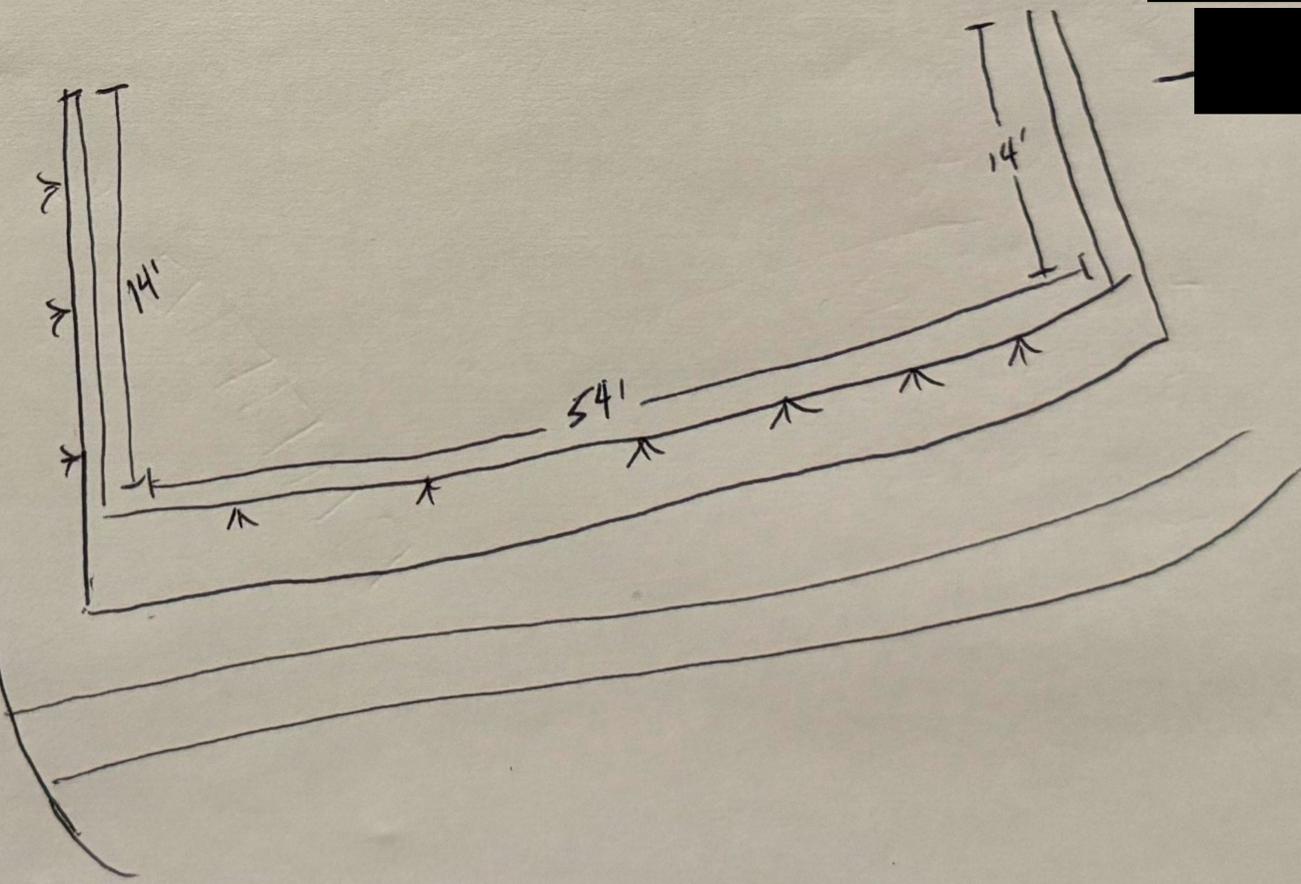
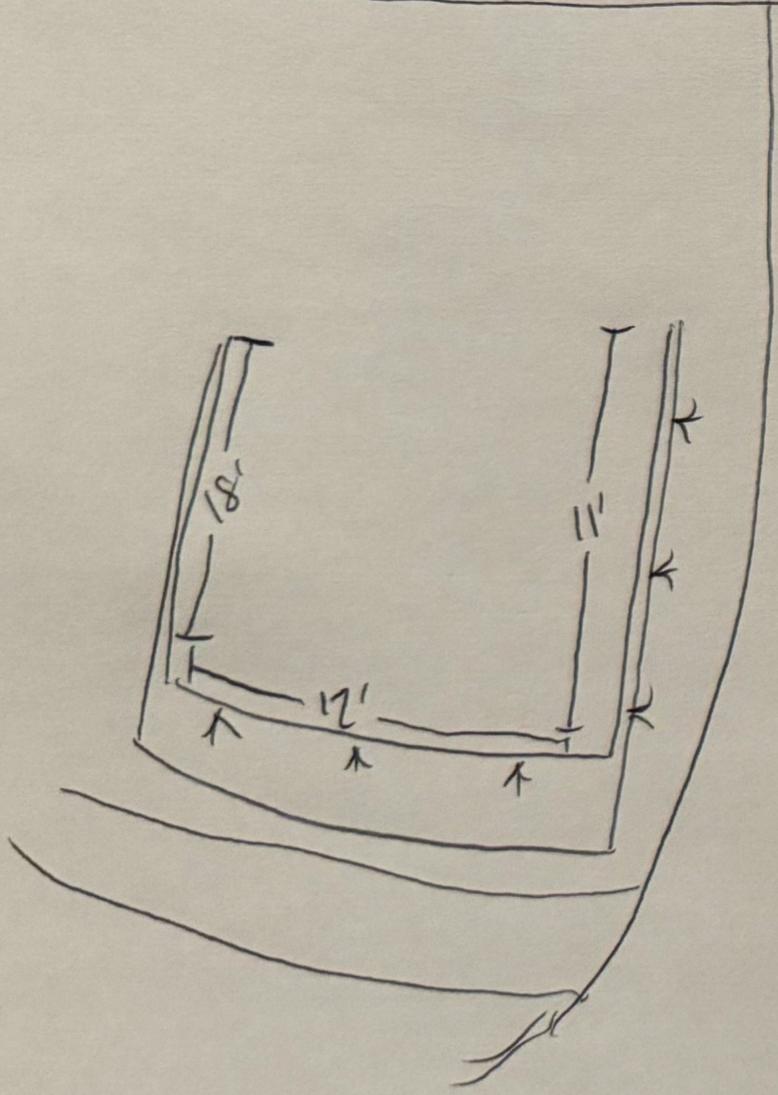


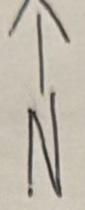




CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

- CONCRETE BASE
- [REDACTED]
- Top cap w/ LIP
- DOWN LIGHTS
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] HEIGHT





□ - 24" PAVER

☞ - YUCCA

⊗ - Paddle cactus

☞☞☞ - ROSEMARY

~ - CONFEDERATE JASMINE

☞ - MYSTIC SPIRES

↓ - AGAVE

☞ - TEXAS SAGE

☞☞☞ - DECOMPOSED GRANITE

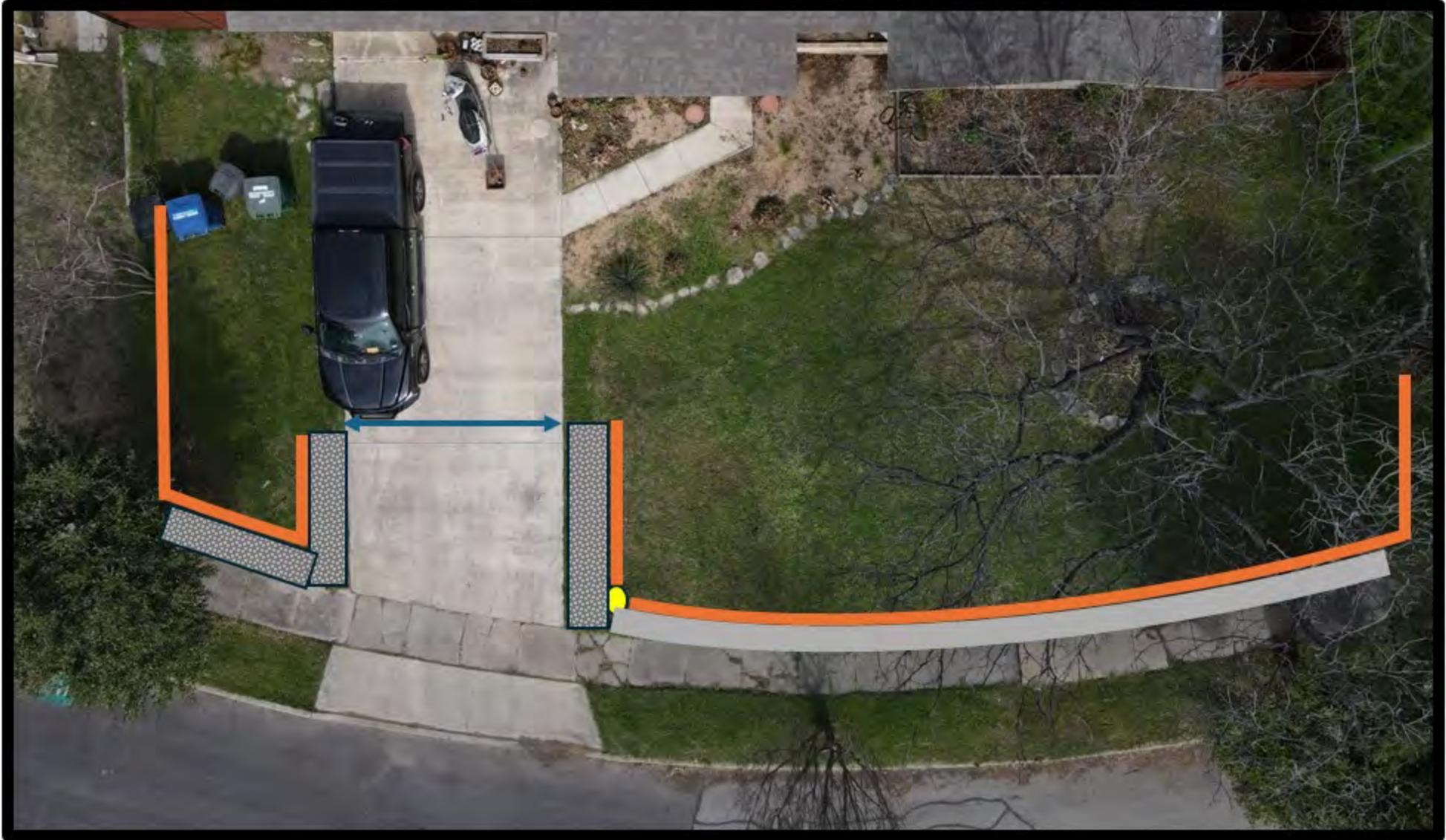
☞☞☞ - MULCH BLACK

☞☞ - ARTICHOKE AGAVE

☞☞☞ - TEXAS SAGE BLENTHURST PINK

BLACK MULCH







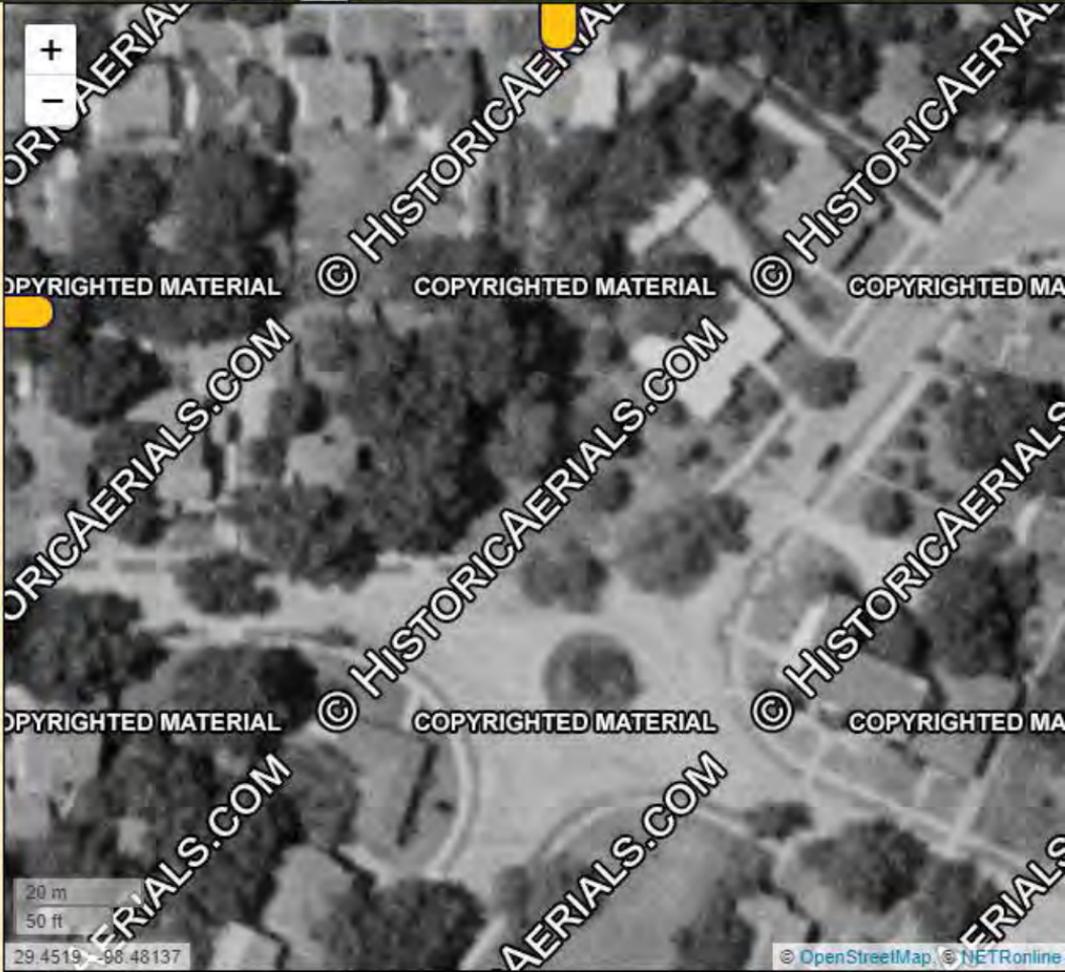




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20 m

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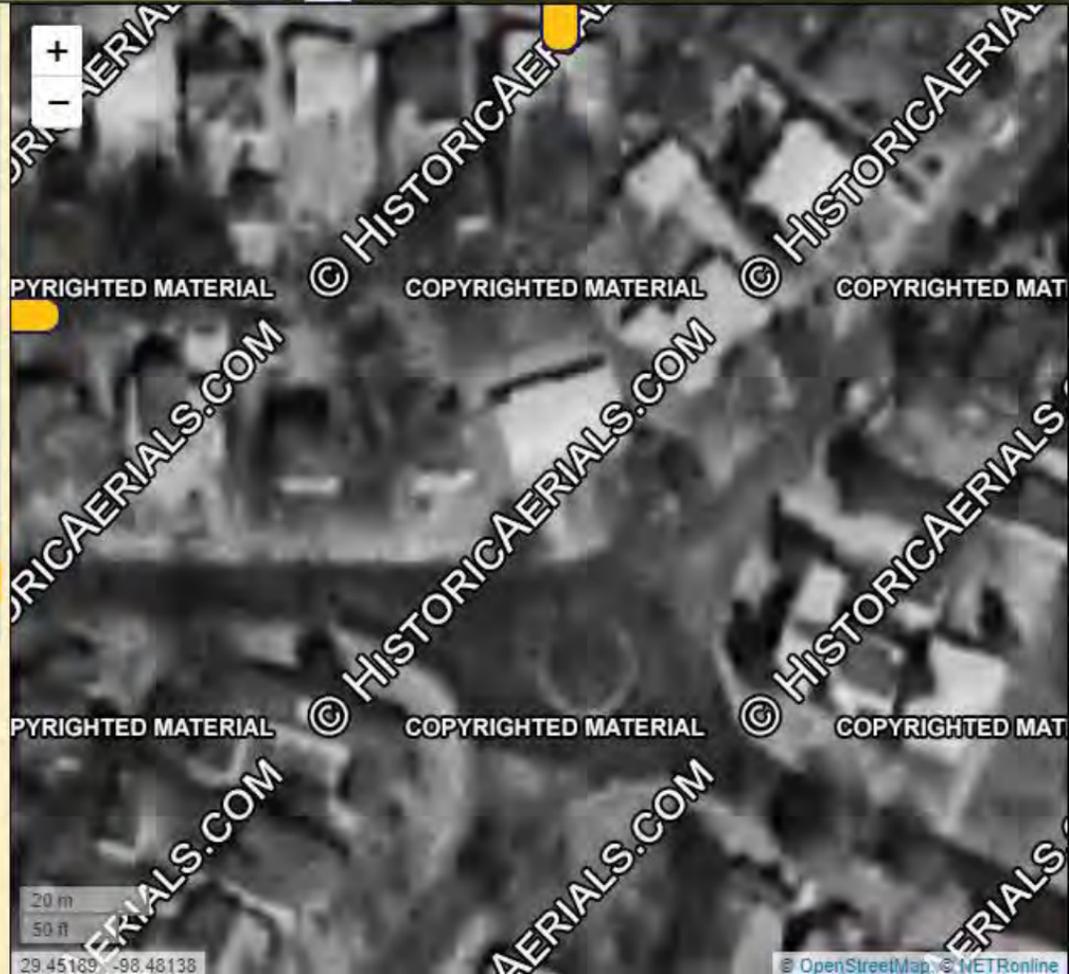
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20 m
50 ft

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