



Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts
Commission

Report to the Committee

To: Cherokee Triangle Architectural Review Committee
Thru: Savannah Darr, Historic Preservation Officer
From: Drake Watson, Planner I – Urban Design
Date: June 12, 2026

Case No: 26-COA-0105
Classification: Committee Review

GENERAL INFORMATION

Address: 1293 Everett Ave
Applicant: Iman Ghali
1293 Everett Ave
Louisville, KY 40204
Owner: Same as applicant
Project Cost: \$ 1,500

Description of proposed exterior alterations:

The applicant requests approval for after-the-fact construction of a four course, eleven inch high, brick retaining wall in the front yard. It begins at the western corner of the property, running parallel to the sidewalk along Everett Ave, and continuing northeast for approximately 7', parallel to the sidewalk along Longest Ave.

Communications with Applicant, Completion of Application

An application was submitted on May 6, 2026 following zoning enforcement case #ENF-ZON-26-000622 for work being conducted without a COA, which was opened on April 24, 2026. The COA application was assigned to a case manager on May 11, 2026, at which time the application was considered complete and requiring committee level review.

The case is scheduled to be reviewed by the Cherokee Triangle Architectural Review Committee (ARC) on Wednesday, June 17, 2026 at 4:30 PM, in Room 101 of the Metro Development Center located at 444 South 5th Street.

FINDINGS

Guidelines

The following design review guidelines, approved for the Cherokee Triangle Preservation District, are applicable to the proposed exterior alteration: **Site**. The report of the

Commission Staff's findings of fact and conclusions with respect to these guidelines is attached to this report. The following additional findings are incorporated in this report:

Site Context/ Background

The property is zoned R-5B Two-Family Residential and is located within the Traditional Neighborhood form district. The property is located on the northern corner of Longest and Everett Avenues. The lot contains a structure that is a two-and-a-half-story craftsman style home with American Foursquare influences. It features a hipped roof with front gabled dormer and a low-sloped hipped front porch on three columns with dentil trim. It is on a raised foundation and features 1/1 windows. It is surrounded mostly by structures of similar heights, but in a variety of styles and a larger, three-story multi-family structure.

Previous COAs include:

- 24-COA-0263, approved December 2024 for trim detailing repair and window replacement.
- 24-COA-0301, approved December 2024 for window replacement.

Conclusions

The after-the-fact construction of a brick retaining wall does not meet the guidelines for **Site**. This property did not historically have a retaining wall in the front yard; rather the yard featured the traditional front yard berm. Previous property owners have altered the front berm topography with the installation of a garden bed and stones, as well as vertically placed bricks along the sidewalk to retain the soil. However, over time the historic berm has mostly been preserved. With the construction of the brick wall and the infill of soil, the character defining berm has been altered, which does not meet the guidelines **ST.9**, **ST. 14**, and **ST.15**.

There is no evidence of the applicant trying alternative methods to retain the soil prior to installation of the retaining wall as requested in guideline **ST.13**. The overall height of the historic berm is not greater than 24" when measured from grade, and was not unstable. There is also no context for a retaining wall in the area. While some retaining walls do exist within the District and further along Everett and Longest Avenues, most of the properties in the immediate vicinity do not have retaining walls, thus not meeting guideline **ST.14**. The immediately adjacent property to the west at 1291 Everett Ave does feature two courses of simple, dry stacked landscape pavers parallel to the sidewalk, in an attempt to retain the soil, similar to the vertically placed bricks along the subject property.

The after-the-fact brick wall is less than 2' in height, and is a material that can be found in the District for retaining walls. However, most walls are made of stone, CMU blocks, or poured concrete. Because there is no onsite or immediately adjacent historic precedence for a wall and the character defining berm has been altered, the proposal is not appropriate for the site or the District.

RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the information furnished by the applicant, Staff recommend that the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness be **denied**, and that the retaining wall be removed and the berm restored within three months of today's date.

Drake Watson

Drake Watson
Planner I – Urban Design

6/12/2026

Date

Site

Standard Design Guideline Checklist

+	Meets Guidelines	NA	Not Applicable
-	Does Not Meet Guidelines	NSI	Not Sufficient Information
+/-	Meets Guidelines with Conditions		

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
ST.1	Preserve established property line patterns as well as street and alley widths in a preservation district. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If re-platting is considered, draw boundaries based on historic development patterns. 	NA	
ST.2	Maintain a walkway that connects the street and building when this is a character defining feature in the surrounding context.	NA	
ST.3	Install a new sidewalk to be compatible with the historic ones in the area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the existing width of neighboring sidewalks. Use a traditional sidewalk material as seen in the surrounding context, such as historic concrete mix or pavers. Match the pattern of the historic sidewalks where that is character defining. 	NA	
ST.4	Minimize the visual impact of parking and delivery areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access to structures from an alley wherever one exists. If alley access is unfeasible, locate driveways, parking areas, and loading docks to the side and rear of properties. Use landscaping to screen a parking area. Plant and landscape a large parking lot to soften the impact of paving. Do not use paving in the front yard for a parking area unless necessary due to site specific conditions or historically appropriate to the surrounding context. Do not create a new driveway or garage that opens onto a primary street unless necessary due to site specific conditions or historically appropriate to the surrounding context. 	NA	
ST.5	Maintain a historically significant fence or site wall.	NA	There was no retaining wall previously on this site.
ST.6	Repair a historic fence with materials that match existing sections of historic fencing in height and detail. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If an exact match of materials cannot be made, a simplified design that is subordinate to the historic is appropriate. 	NA	

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
ST.7	<p>Design a new fence to be compatible with the architectural style of the house and existing fences in the surrounding context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install a metal fence under 3' in the front yard where there is historic precedent. Wood may be used where there is historic precedent in the District. • Install a rear- or side-yard privacy fence to be set back from the side wall by at least 2'. • Install a rear- or side-yard privacy fence so the finished side is presented out. • Use stained or painted wood for a wood privacy fence. • Any privacy fencing shall be 7' feet in height or less, as measured from grade, including any retaining walls. • Do not install a masonry wall in a street-visible location unless it is used to retain earth at changes in grade, screen service areas, or unless a historic precedent exists. • Do not install chain-link, split-rail, or woven-wood fencing or concrete block walls in areas visible from the public view unless historically appropriate to the surrounding context. 	NA	
ST.8	<p>Preserve a large tree in the front yard unless it is diseased, dying, and/or damaging the historic building. A report from an arborist can determine this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and place trees or landscaping that minimize the likelihood of damage to structures once mature. 	NA	
ST.9	<p>Maintain original front yard topography, including grades, slopes, elevations, and berms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not recontour front-yard berms into stepped terraces. • Do not use railroad ties, landscape timbers, or other historically inappropriate materials for retaining walls. • Do not carry out excavations or regrading within or adjacent to a historic building, which could cause the foundation to shift or destroy significant archaeological resources. 	-	The retaining wall changes the topography of the historic front yard berm to being mostly at grade with the foundation of the house, sloping only slightly downward to the top of the brick wall.
ST.10	<p>Use low-water and non-evasive species when considering a new planting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the use of plantings and placement that will assist in managing rainfall at the site. These Low Impact Design (LID) strategies help to control rainfall and storm water runoff at the source. It also helps distribute storm water across the site to replenish groundwater supplies and contribute to overall water efficiency. 	N	
ST.11	<p>Match the grade of adjacent properties with new construction.</p>	NA	
ST.12	<p>Preserve and maintain a historic site wall or retaining wall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair only the portion of a historic retaining wall or site wall that is deteriorated. • Preserve the character of a historic mortar joint when repointing a historic wall or retaining wall. • If an exact match cannot be made, a simplified design is appropriate. 	NA	There was no retaining wall upon designation. Although there are currently garden stones that delineate the edge of the garden adject to the sidewalk from the grass in the front lawn, they do not completely function as a retaining wall.

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
			The brick retaining wall is adjacent to the sidewalk.
ST.13	<p>Explore alternatives before proposing significant site and topographical changes to a historic site. Alternatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct a subterranean retaining wall to stabilize the slope, but that sits below the landscaped surface, and so remains invisible. Use a stabilizing plant material or other ground cover that does not require mowing or a high degree of maintenance, rather than constructing a new retaining wall. Construct a low, transparent fence at the top of the slope to provide an enclosed front yard area for children or pets, rather than replacing the slope with a new retaining wall. Where low curbing (approximately 6") is prevalent, replicate this rather than constructing a wall. 	-	<p>The topography of the yard was altered when dirt was poured between the brick wall and the garden stones. The front yard previously featured a front yard berm to the sidewalk, but is now mostly at grade with the foundation of the house, only slightly sloping downward to the top of the brick wall.</p> <p>The previous yard slope was not unstable.</p>
ST.14	<p>Avoid adding a new retaining wall until all alternatives have been explored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only add a new retaining wall that will alter the slope of a historic front yard area where at least one of the following conditions is present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The slope is not a character defining feature of the preservation district or individual landmark. There is a high level of variety in the treatment of front yard areas among adjacent properties, including retaining walls. The front yard slope is unstable, threatens the foundation of a historic structure, and other strategies have been tested and been unsuccessful. 	-	<p>The slope of the yard is character defining for the area, as most homes in the general vicinity feature the same slope adjacent to the front sidewalk. The immediately adjacent property to the west at 1291 Everett Ave does feature two courses of simple dry stacked landscape pavers parallel to the sidewalk in an attempt to retain the soil, similar to the vertically placed bricks along the subject property.</p> <p>The historic slope of the front yard berm was low, only changing about 24" as measuring the change in grade from the foundation of the house to the sidewalk.</p>
ST.15	<p>If all other strategies have failed, locate and design a new retaining wall to minimize impacts on the preservation district or historic property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a low-kick wall, up to 2' in height, to help stabilize the yard while maintaining most of the historic slope. Design a new retaining wall to minimize visual impacts on the character defining features of the historic property, block, and district. Use a material that is historically significant to the preservation district or that relates to the historic property. Avoid using terraced retaining walls. Do not completely replace the slope with a tall retaining wall. 	-	<p>Although the new wall is less than 2' in height, dirt was infilled from the yard to the top of the wall, removing the historic slope of the berm. The new retaining wall is made of brick masonry, which does slightly relate to the District as other walls in the District are made of masonry, but most are made of either stone, CMU blocks, or poured concrete. The wall is not terraced.</p>
ST.16	<p>Preserve a historic site material when possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a brick, stone, or poured concrete step or pathway wherever present. Maintain historic curbing whenever possible. Any replacement should use historic materials. If replacement with historic materials is not technically or economically feasible, a substitute material may be used if it duplicates the color, 	NA	

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
	<p>texture, pattern, and visual appearance of the original.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use paving materials that are compatible with adjacent sites and architectural character. 		
ST.17	Preserve and maintain a historic lighting fixture if it is character defining, when possible.	NA	
ST.18	<p>Design new or replacement lighting that is in character with the setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a fixture that is compatible with architectural and site design elements. • When adding a new fixture, use an understated fixture that is subordinate to the historic building. • When installing a new fixture, attach it in a way that does not damage the historic fabric. • Design lighting to be contained within a site and to not spill over to a neighboring property. • Softly illuminate an architectural feature if desired. • Direct light down and away from a neighboring property. • For a commercial property, minimize free standing lighting. Instead, use ambient light from a storefront as a light source. • Do not use an imitation historic fixture that may convey a false sense of history. • Do not use a light source that creates a harsh glare or color. • Do not light parking lots in a harsh manner. • Do not use a blinking or animated light. 	NA	
ST19	<p>Minimize the visual impact of a service area and its related fixtures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position an air conditioning unit, satellite dish, greenhouse addition, overhead wiring, or other fixture type on a secondary elevation where they do not detract from the character of the site. • Screen a cellular tower and associated fixture from view. • Install a utility line underground wherever possible. • Do not harm historic resources through road widening, driveway construction, or underground utility repair. 	NA	
ST.20	Locate pools in the rear yard. Do not harm historic resources during the construction of a pool.	NA	