

4. COA-067073-2020

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

January 28, 2020

PROPERTY ADDRESS

2209 East Grace Street

DISTRICT

St. John's Church

APPLICANT

Richmond Hill



STAFF CONTACT

C. Jeffries

Commission of Architectural Review

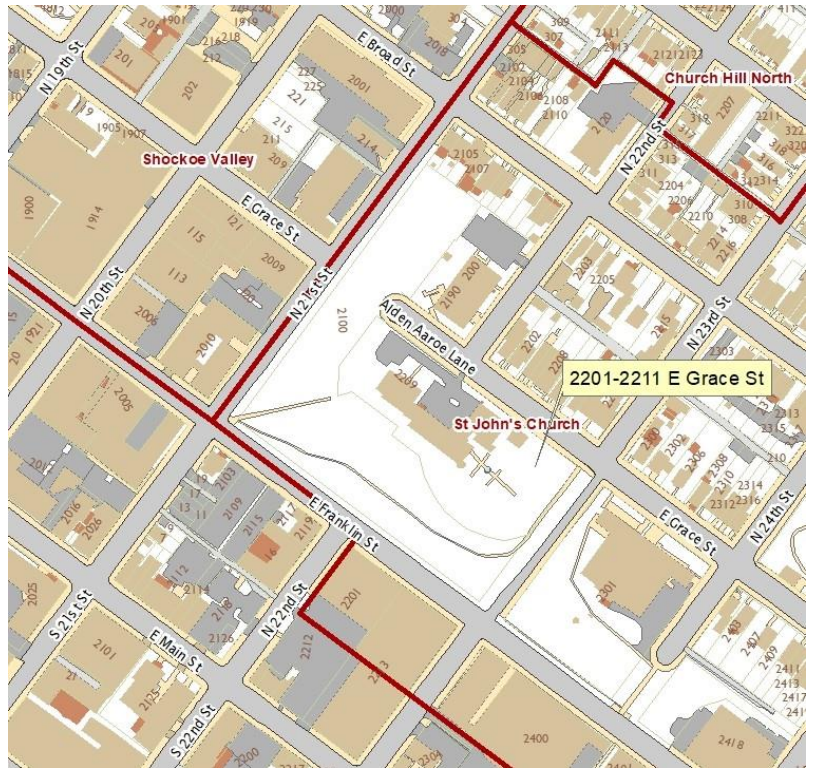
STAFF REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Repair existing masonry wall; add new openings, metal gate, brick detailing, and a sign.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant requests approval to modify the brick wall surrounding Richmond Hill in the St. John's Church City Old and Historic District.
- The plans include adding a gate to improve pedestrian access to the grounds. The design of the gate is based on the original entry to the grounds which was formerly located in another section of the wall.
- The applicant also proposes to install a keyhole access in the wall near the intersection of East Grace Street and North 23rd Street. Two small holes will provide limited visual access to the gardens.
- Historic Richmond has an easement on the Richmond Hill property and is supportive of staffs' recommendations.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

Staff recently approved general repair and in-kind replacement for various buildings on the grounds in November 2019. A major renovation project on the property was approved by the Commission in 2002.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- The new gate design be simplified to appear as new construction, rather than replicating the historic design, and the revised design be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.
- The design of the proposed keyhole feature be simplified to read as a contemporary alteration, and the revised design be submitted to staff for administrative approval.
- The repointing be done in accordance with the Commission's Maintenance and Repair guide for masonry and the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #2.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Building and *When it is not possible to modify an existing* The application states that the owners are

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| Site Accessibility #5, pg. 79 | <i>entrance, a new entrance may be made, or an existing opening may be altered to create a new entrance.</i> | interested in creating a more welcoming pedestrian access to the grounds. Existing openings in the wall include vehicular access gates as well as small service gates flanking the chapel building. The owners would like to create a safe, welcoming and accessible entrance for pedestrians into the grounds adjacent to the vehicular access. Staff finds that the existing entrances are not adequate for pedestrian access and is supportive of creating a new entrance. |
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| Fences & Walls #1, pg. 78 | <i>Original fences and walls should be retained and maintained whenever possible.</i> | The file for this property as well as physical evidence, indicate that the historic brick wall, which could date from the early 20 th century, has been modified over time. Vehicular gates were added in the 1990s and other openings have been bricked in. Staff finds that a new opening would continue to retain the existing wall, which the application states is also in need of repair. Staff also finds that the proposed keyholes serve to provide access to the historic campus and gardens to the general public while minimally impacting the historic fabric. Some sources indicate parts of the garden may date to the late eighteenth century. The gardens are not currently visible from the street. |
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| Standards #10, pg. 59 | <i>While it is acceptable to use salvaged materials as in-kind replacement, adding features or salvaged architectural elements that suggest an inaccurate or undocumented sequence of construction should be avoided because this confuses our understanding of the evolution of Richmond's historic built environment.</i> | Though staff is overall supportive of the modifications to the existing wall, staff finds that the proposed designs create an inaccurate sequence of construction for a property that has a very long and complex history. Recreating a historic feature in a different location would confuse the understanding of the evolution of the property. <u>Staff recommends that the new gate design be simplified to appear as new construction, rather than replicating the historic design, and the revised design be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</u> Similarly, staff finds that the design of the proposed keyhole is traditional and decorative and may not read as a contemporary feature. The application states that the hole will be modeled after the keyhole at the Garden of the Knights of Malta in Rome. This feature is a simple keyhole in a wooden door. <u>Staff recommends the design of the proposed keyhole feature be simplified to read as a contemporary alteration, and the revised design</u> |
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Maintenance and Repair, Masonry pg. 89

The repointing of masonry is necessary in cases where there is evidence of deterioration. Do not repoint with mortar that is stronger than the original mortar or the existing brick.

be submitted to staff for administrative approval.

The plans indicate that the existing brick wall will be repaired. Since the wall is a historic character-defining feature of the property, staff recommends the repointing be done in accordance with the Commission's Maintenance and Repair guide for masonry and the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #2.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (c) of the City Code, as well as with the Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines, specifically the pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.

FIGURES



Figure 1. Location of proposed gate.



Figure 2. Detail showing deterioration and previous alterations.



Figure 3. Il Buco Della Serratura, Villa del Priorato di Malta