



Staff Report  
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

7. COA-135960-2023.	<b>Final Review Meeting Date: 9/26/2023</b>
<b>Applicant/Petitioner</b>	William Shields
<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Result of a Notice of Violation:</b> Alter a front yard, concrete curb, veneering it in thin brick.
<b>Project Location</b>	
<b>Address:</b> 211 N. 27 <sup>th</sup> Street	
<b>Historic District:</b> St. Johns Church	
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The Applicant proposes to alter a front yard, concrete curb by veneering it with brick.</p> <p>The concrete curb is located in front of a semi-attached Italianate, brick row house ca. 1894.</p> <p>The concrete curb spans the width of the two dwelling's front yards at 209-211 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street.</p> <p>This work has been completed without receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission.</p>	
<b>Staff Recommendation</b>	<b>Denial</b>
<b>Previous Reviews</b>	<p>While the Commission has not previously reviewed this application, Staff spoke with one of the dwelling's occupants about the proposal at the beginning of July 2023.</p> <p>Staff observed the work being completed without a COA on July 27, 2023 and explained that a COA would need to be obtained. Not receiving a response, Staff issued a notice of violation to the property on August 30, 2023. By this time, the work had been completed.</p>
<b>Staff Contact</b>	Alex Dandridge, <a href="mailto:alex.dandridge@rva.gov">alex.dandridge@rva.gov</a> , (804) 646-6569
<b>Staff Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• denial of the application</li> <li>• original concrete curb be repaired and retained or reconstructed to match the original in height and dimension.</li> </ul>

## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>New Construction, Fences &amp; Walls, pg. 51</p>	<p><i>1. Fence, wall, and gate designs should reflect the scale of the historic structures they surround, as well as the character of nearby fences, walls, and gates.</i></p> <p><i>2. Fence, wall, or gate materials should relate to building materials commonly found in the neighborhood.</i></p>	<p>The applicant has veneered an existing concrete curb with brick. The concrete curb is shared with the neighboring, attached dwelling at 209 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street whose section remains concrete.</p> <p>Low concrete curbs between front property lines and the sidewalk are common features throughout the St. John's Church City Old and Historic District. A few have been inappropriately altered overtime, having fences installed on top of them or even stones and/or soldier course brick.</p> <p>The semi-attached dwellings at 209-211 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street are identical, and the concrete curbs out front were identical as well, continuing the motif of visual uniformity between the two units.</p> <p>The alteration of 211's concrete curb with brick breaks this visual uniformity.</p> <p>Brick retaining walls/curbs in front yards do exist within the district, however concrete curbs and front yard metal or wooden fences are much more common.</p>
<p>Standards for Site Improvements, Fences &amp; Walls, pg. 78</p>	<p><i>1. Original fences and walls should be retained and maintained whenever possible.</i></p> <p><i>2. Existing brick or stone walls, boxwood hedges, wooden picket fences and cast or wrought iron fences should not be removed or replaced with contemporary features.</i></p>	<p>The original concrete wall was not removed and exists beneath the brick veneer.</p> <p>It appears that the concrete retaining wall was cracked and in need of repair.</p> <p>Per the <i>Guidelines</i>, the concrete curb should have been repaired or reconstructed to match the original rather than covering the damaged curb with brick. <u>Staff recommends denial of the application, and recommends that the original concrete curb be repaired and retained, or reconstructed to match the original in height and dimension.</u></p>

*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. Semi-attached dwellings at 209-211 N 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Valentine Museum Archives



Figure 2. Staff observed work being completed without a COA on July 26, 2023. Staff sent an application page and a courtesy email to the property contact on file, suggesting they stop work and apply for a COA.



Figure 3. Completed work.

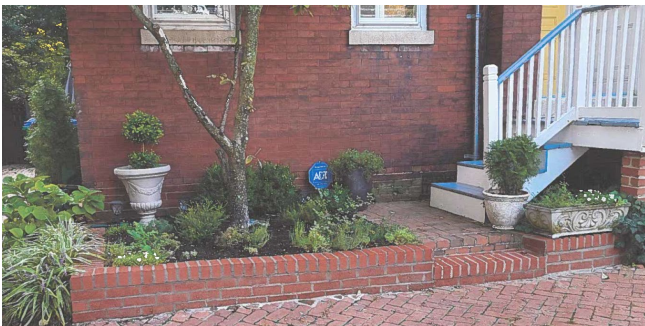


Figure 4. VCU Photo Archives - 209-211 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street, 1996.

