



Commission of Architectural Review

4. COA-181517-2026	Final Review Meeting Date: 3/24/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Sean Wheeler
Project Description	Construct a four foot brick wall in a front yard
Project Location	
Address: 407 W Marshall	
Historic District: Jackson Ward	
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The existing building on the property is a ca. 1886, Italianate, masonry house.</p> <p>The applicant requests approval to remove a deteriorated wooden front yard fence, and to replace it with a new four foot brick wall.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, Alex.Dandridge@RVA.gov, (804)646-6569
Previous Reviews	None.
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider incorporating vertical piers at wall ends and at either side of the entrance gate. This feature would reinforce compatibility with the prevailing design vocabulary of front-yard walls in the district. Final rendering submitted for staff approval. • Final metal gate selection submitted to staff for approval.

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>New Construction, Residential Outbuildings, Fences & 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 proposed wall will be constructed of a single width of red brick. It will have a row lock course at the top and the base. The main portion of the wall will be a laid in a herringbone pattern to create a “staggard” or “zig-zag” appearance. The applicant proposes to install a salvaged wrought iron gate that aligns with the primary entrance of the building. It will be four feet in height.</p> <p>The Jackson Ward Old and Historic District contains a range of front-yard wall and fence types varying in height and material. These include low concrete and brick retaining walls, as well as taller three- to four-foot brick walls. Construction methods vary, with examples of all-brick walls and combinations of brick with wood or metal.</p>
<p>Standards for Site Improvements, Fences & Walls, pg. 78</p>	<p><i>3. If not original to a site, new street-front fences, walls, and gates should be compatible with the historic structure in design, materials, and location, and should be based on physical or documentary evidence does not exist, the proposed fence, wall, or gate should be compatible in design, materials, and location, and should look to precedent on the block face or the block face opposite, or within the district, but not outside the district. By following this guidance, in some circumstances, permission for new fences, walls, or gates may be granted.</i></p> <p><i>5. When considering the design of new fences, remember that some districts, such as Church Hill North and Union Hill, historically featured modest wooden picket fences, while some districts, such as Monument Avenue and West Grace Street, more rarely had fences, and when they did occur, were rarely wooden picket fences. In the event of a conjectural fence, the design should seek simplicity, rather than elaboration.</i></p> <p><i>6. A new fence or wall should be constructed using materials and designs appropriate to the District. Height restrictions are governed by the Zoning Ordinance.</i></p>	<p>Prominent Brick Wall Precedents: 524 W Clay; 510 W Clay; 418 W Clay; 314 W Clay; 303 W Clay (stone); 6 W Clay; 4 E Clay; 12–14 E Clay.</p> <p>Staff found no historic documentation indicating that a front-yard brick wall previously existed on the subject property. The current front-yard fence appears to date to the late 1980s—early 1990s.</p> <p>The proposed wall’s height and materials are compatible with the primary structure and reflect materials commonly found within the district. As such, the wall would not detract from the historic character of the building.</p> <p>Field survey indicates that while three- to four-foot brick walls are not widespread district-wide, they are well represented along West Clay Street, largely dating to the mid-20th century. A consistent defining feature among these examples is the use of vertical piers dividing wall sections, typically at corners and flanking entry gates.</p> <p>The proposed herringbone brick pattern is not currently present within the district. However, existing walls are generally non-original and exhibit a range of designs distinguishable from contributing structures. Staff finds the introduction of a herringbone pattern acceptable, as it remains compatible in material, scale, and placement.</p> <p>To better align with established district precedents, Staff recommends <u>incorporating vertical piers at wall ends and at either side of the entrance gate. This feature would reinforce compatibility with the prevailing design vocabulary of front-yard walls in the district.</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. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026



Figure 2. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026



Figure 3. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026



Figure 4. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026



Figure 5. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026



Figure 6. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026



Figure 7. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026

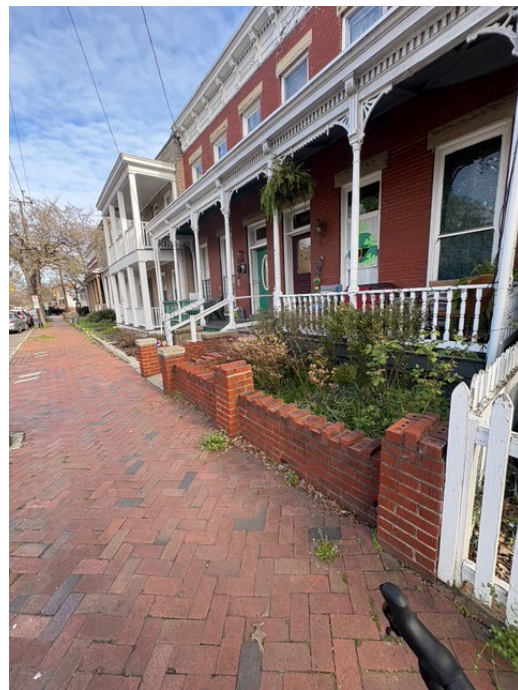


Figure 8. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026



Figure 9. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026



Figure 10. Brick Wall Example – Jackson Ward March 2026