



Commission of Architectural Review

1. COA-181517-2026	Final Review Meeting Date: 4/28/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Nathan & Olivia Morgan
Project Description	Replace rear privacy fence with a brick wall
Project Location	
Address: 2700 E Franklin Street	
Historic District: St. John's Church	
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant requests approval to remove a deteriorated wooden privacy fence located along the west side and rear of the property, and to construct a new 24-inch-high brick retaining wall.</p> <p>The subject property is a masonry Queen Anne style residence, featuring a faux mansard roof dating to circa 1891.</p> <p>The wall will step up in locations to follow the grade of the site.</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"> • Approval of the removal of the existing rear privacy fence. • Staff recommends that the wall be constructed using a simple running bond pattern, or another bond pattern commonly found within the district. Final bond pattern and brick and mortar selections must be submitted to staff for administrative review and 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 applicant proposes to remove an existing deteriorated wooden privacy fence located within the rear yard of a corner property. The existing enclosure consists of a standard six-foot-tall wooden privacy fence.</p> <p>Following removal, the applicant proposes to construct a 24-inch-high red brick retaining wall along the west side of the rear yard, adjacent to North 27th Street. No new wall or fencing is proposed along the rear property line abutting the alley.</p> <p>Walls are a common site feature within the St. John's Church Old and Historic District, where both historic and contemporary examples are found. These features are typically constructed of durable materials such as brick, granite, or cast concrete, and in some cases incorporate metal elements. As such, masonry walls contribute to the established streetscape character of the district.</p> <p>The applicable guidelines recommend that new fences and walls be informed by design precedents within the district. Staff finds that the proposed low brick retaining wall is consistent with these precedents in terms of scale, material, and placement, and will not adversely affect the historic character of the subject property or its surrounding context.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the wall be constructed using a simple running bond pattern, or another bond pattern commonly found within the district. Final bond pattern and brick and mortar selections must be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval</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. Existing conditions, April 2026.



Figure 2. Existing conditions, April 2026.



Figure 3. Example of low brick retaining wall nearby. South east corner of N. 29th Street and E. Franklin Street. April 2026.



Figure 4. Example of new brick wall nearby which was approved by CAR in 2022. April 2026.



Figure 5. . Example of new brick wall approved by CAR in 2022. April 2026.



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia

