



PLANNING REPORT

Architectural Review Board

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

36-40 N. HIGH STREET 23-147MPR

www.dublinohiousa.gov/arb/22-147

Case Summary

Address	36-40 N. High Street, Dublin OH 43017
Proposal	Request for the repair and replacement of stones within a historic retaining wall on shared lots totalling .46 acres in the Historic District, northeast of the intersection of Wing Hill Lane and N. High Street.
Request	Request approval of a Minor Project Review.
Zoning	HD-HC, Historic District – Historic Core
Planning Recommendation	<u>Approval of Minor Project Review with conditions</u>
Next Steps	Upon review and approval of Minor Project Review (MPR), by the Architectural Review Board (ARB), the applicant may file for building permits, and a demolition permit for 36-38 N. High Street, through Building Standards.
Applicant	Wes Davis, Osborn Engineering Bernie Kooi, Kooi Structural Engineering
Case Manager	Sarah Tresouthick Holt, AICP, ASLA, Senior Planner (614) 410-4662 sholt@dublin.oh.us

Site Location Map

22-147MPR | 36-40 N. High St



Site Features

1 Repair location



1. Background

Site Summary

This approximately 102-foot long historic wall straddles three lots and ownerships: 36-38 N. High Street, 40 N. High Street, and 25 North Street and is part of a continuous wall system that includes the historic privy behind 36-38 N. High Street. The section between 36-38 and 40 N. High Street is failing. The property is zoned HD-HC, Historic District - Historic Core and is located immediately north of Wing Hill Lane, between N. High Street and N. Blacksmith Lane.

The U-shaped wall sits toward the rear of the properties and accommodates approximately seven feet of grade change from west to east. The wall is visible from both Wing Hill and N. Blacksmith Lanes. The applicant seeks to stabilize the wall for two reasons: 1) a Final Development Plan (FDP) condition of approval for the mixed-use development at 36-38 N. High Street to allow installation of utilities and 2) conservation of the historic resource.

The wall is not identified on the City's Historical and Cultural Assessment from 2017, but was constructed ca. 1934 by Forest "Ticky" Wing, for which Wing Hill Lane is named.

Development History

March 2023

Because of the uniqueness of this request, the Board heard an Informal Review in March of 2023 to provide feedback on the project's approach. Three options were presented for the Board's discussion: no action, replace the wall with a modern structure, or repair/preserve the existing wall. The Board unanimously stated preference for the repair/preserve option, and encouraged the two owners to work together. Discussion items included those outlined below, with project updates in italics:

- 1) Does the Board support a holistic approach of repairing the entire wall system vs. individual repairs?
Board supported this direction; applicant has included 40 N. High owner.
- 2) What recommendation does the Board have regarding the proposed design and structural approaches for the wall?
 - a. No action
 - b. Structural reconstruction of the wall using concrete footers and a false wall that would be faced with the historic stone and perhaps allowing the wall to be relocated in a more convenient place on the site.
 - c. Structural reconstruction using only the historic materials and techniques
Option C preferred by Board. Applicant proposes using dry laid techniques combined with underdrain and French drain systems; use of mortar (hidden) only where necessary. Note Building Standards' opinion: footers and false wall (Option B) may be necessary to prove structural calculations, as discussed herein. Relocation of wall is not supported.
- 3) What additional information would the Board need to make a determination on one of these solutions?
Board requested information on whether wall could support parking at 40 N. High; which property owners shall participate; any other limitations that would prevent a holistic approach; and if existing stones are suitable for reconstruction. Applicant responded with setbacks for parking at 40 N. High but no structural calculations; both property owners now participating; no indications of additional limitations; if on-site stone not suitable, similar local stone shall be used.

- 4) If the Board supports historic reconstruction, would the Board support the use of historic mortar that is not visible if it improved the structural strength of the wall?
Board supported using mortar that is not visible; indicated in narrative.

December 2022

An FDP for 36-38 N. High approved by Board with condition of approval: approved MPR needed to stabilize this wall prior to demolition work at 36-38, based on proximity of future utilities to the wall, where excavation could further endanger it.

November 2022

A MPR submitted for this wall's repair, spanning 36-40 N. High Street. Post review, project stalled with differing opinions about how to repair and to what extent. Staff suggested Informal process.

May 2021

Dublin requested PDL review wall, its integrity, and potential for reconstruction or demolition. Structural assessment provided by Korda, attached. Report noted that original wall functioned due to free-draining material backfilled behind interlocking face stones, allowing natural drainage to percolate through. Also noted that mortar-filled joints have trapped water behind wall, causing failure. Study recommended professional stonemasons be consulted regarding: preservation, limiting parking surcharges, drainage, and invasive tree growth.

Early 2020

Owner of 40 N. High Street brought Informal Review for expansion of building, addition of townhomes, partial demolition of historic wall, and full demolition of the historic privy under previous Code. Board expressed unanimous support to preserve wall and privy; acknowledged potential for wall dismantling and rebuilding. Proposal did not move forward.

Site Characteristics

The existing wall between 36 and 40 N. High Street shows numerous areas of deterioration, as noted in PDL's latest report and photographs, attached. Bulging areas are seen on the south-facing portion of the wall at 36-38 N. High Street. Currently, 40 N. High Street uses the top of the walled area as parking, which adds an unanticipated surcharge to the structure. Drainage from that address has been directed to the side of the wall facing 36-38, via a flexible pipe, directly above the previously-mentioned deformation on the south side of the wall.

Process

Subsequent to MPR approval, the applicant may submit the required information to apply for building permits and a demolition permit for 36-38 N. High Street, through Building Standards. Building permits are required in order to provide structural calculations due to the wall's height, proximity to proposed buildings and utilities, and parking lot surcharge.

2. Zoning Code and Guidelines

Historic District – Historic Core District

The site is zoned HD-HC: Historic District – Historic Core. The intent of the Historic Core is to ensure sensitive infill development and provide an improved environment for walking while accommodating vehicles.

Historic Design Guidelines

The development standards are supplemented by the *Historic Design Guidelines*, which provide the Board additional direction on preservation, sensitive design, and complementary materials. Guidelines Section 6.4 speaks to walls, stating that original stone walls...should be maintained, retained, and not be modified in any way. Section 6.4C states that where possible, degraded stone walls should be rehabilitated without compromising the integrity and character.

3. Interim Land Use Principles

As Envision Dublin, the City's new Community Plan, is developed, City Council has adopted Interim Land Use Principles to guide development during this transition. The following principles apply to this request:

1. Think Comprehensively. Plan for the Big Picture. *This project is a joint application by adjacent land owners to conserve a historic wall within the Historic District that was built by a prolific local stonemason. This project will also protect the adjacent notable two-story privy, while allowing new mixed-use development to occur on the southern property.*
2. Balance the Mix of Uses. *This project allows a new mixed-use development to occur on the property to the south.*
3. Provide a Variety of Housing and Neighborhood Choices. *The mixed-use development will include two townhomes, offering a unique Historic District living experience.*
4. Protect and Enhance Our Historic and Cultural Resources. *The project will conserve a historic asset within the district, as well as the work of a locally prominent stone mason.*
5. Integrate Sustainable Design. *The project rebuilds a portion of the original wall with original materials. If additional material is needed, it will be harvested from the 36-38 N. High Street site. This is far more sustainable than building a new wall.*
6. Be Distinctly Dublin. *This project preserves the district's identity and fabric through high-quality restoration techniques and designs.*

4. Project

This project proposes to rehabilitate a historic wall that spans a number of individual properties within the Historic Core. Based on the Board's feedback in March, the engineering team proposes to disassemble the wall in the affected areas and reconstruct it matching it to the original style as much as practicable. An 8-foot by 20-foot area at the southeast corner will be excavated in order to install an underdrain. This underdrain shall be made of gravel backfill, perforated drain pipe wrapped in filter fabric, and earth backfill. At the surface, a French drain will be installed to allow surface drainage from 40 N. High Street to be directed through the new drainage system.

The wall itself is proposed to be reconstructed using dry stack methods, as explained by the mason at the March 2023 Board hearing, and in the current narrative. Mortar shall be used sparingly and only enough to ensure wall stability and shall not be seen at the front faces. Any missing stone shall be taken from the modern wall at 36-38 N. High Street, which was previously approved to be removed as part of that property's FDP. If that location cannot furnish an adequate amount, or quality, of stone, the applicant has committed to use a local stone quarry that can best match the form, texture, and color of the existing stone.

To finish the wall, large cap blocks shall be reinstalled to match the rest of the wall. Stone scuppers will be provided to allow the newly-directed drainage through the wall. Additionally, stone splash blocks shall be placed below the scuppers to prevent any erosion and further maintain a historic appearance. Both the scuppers and splash blocks need to be vernacular and simple in design; those provided in the photographic examples are inappropriate. A condition of approval is included to address this.

Building Standards has repeatedly requested structural engineering calculations be provided to ensure that a dry-laid wall will be adequate to retain both earth and gravel backfill and the parking surcharge. These have not been provided, and it is anticipated that the wall may need to be a more conventional retaining wall, with concrete footers and vertical structure, to meet this requirement. Such a wall could be faced with the original stone, using minimally visible mortar. This is a recommended condition of approval to obtain these calculations prior to any building permits being issued.

Utilities

An existing sewer pipe, which currently daylights through the southeast corner of the wall behind 40 N. High Street, is intended to be incorporated within the wall. This will accomplish two goals: protect the pipe from freezing and damage, and create a condition where the pipe more closely matches modern specifications. Plans for how to incorporate this pipe into the wall have yet to be determined, because there may be bedrock behind the wall which will affect the location and/or slope of the pipe. The applicant has requested that this be determined once the removal of the wall section and creation of the drain system has been accomplished. Staff ideally envisions the sewer pipe being fully located within the wall, or if necessary, a wall extension shall be made to enclose the pipe. A condition of approval is recommended to address this situation.

Additionally, with the previously-approved utility work at 36-38 N. High Street, there will be potential impacts upon this wall where new utilities either undermine the wall or conflict with existing underground utilities. Engineering has requested drawings that show all utilities, proposed and existing, in order to be able to evaluate these conflicts. This is a recommended condition of approval to be provided at building permit.

Parking Impacts

In order to prevent unnecessary surcharges on the reconstructed wall, the owner of 40 N. High Street has committed to establishing parking setbacks from the wall. The plans indicate that parking shall be set back six feet from the south- and east-facing wall segments. This shall be accomplished using concrete wheel stops and needs to be shown on the building permit drawings, per a recommended condition of approval. Should setbacks need to be increased for structural reasons, the condition of approval allows for this.

Invasive Tree Eradication

Interestingly, the large Ailanthus tree at the rear of 40 N. High Street was previously tagged as a landmark tree (#0039). This tree is over 24 inches in diameter, and because of size, could have been considered a landmark tree. Since it is an invasive species however, this is not a tree

that the City would support saving. Ailanthus look quite similar to walnuts, and it was likely mistaken as a valuable tree when tagged. Staff has confirmed that it should be removed.

Additionally, the Ailanthus tree’s suckers, which had invaded the wall, have already been removed; a recommended condition of approval states that maintenance to prevent reinfestation is the responsibility of the 40 N. High Street owner.

4. Plan Review

Minor Project Review Criteria	
Criteria	Review
1. The MP shall be consistent with the Community Plan, applicable Zoning Code requirements, <i>Historic Design Guidelines</i> , and adopted plans, policies, and regulations.	Criteria Met with Conditions: This reconstruction is in general conformance with the Plan, Code, and Guidelines, with the proposed condition. Information to indicate structural capacity is still needed.
2. In cases where a MP is proposed within or as part of an approved PDP or FDP, the MP shall be consistent with such approved PDP or FDP.	Criteria Met: Submittal and approval of this MPR was required as a condition for the PDP/FDP for 36-38 N. High Street.
3. The MP shall be consistent with the record established by the required reviewing body, the associated staff report, and the Director’s recommendation.	Criteria Met with Conditions: The project is consistent with the record, report, and Director’s recommendation, when combined with the conditions.
4. The proposed land uses meet all applicable requirements and use specific standards of Section 153.172 Uses.	Not Applicable. The repair of the wall will not affect land uses.
5. The proposed development is consistent with the <i>Historic Design Guidelines</i> .	Criteria Met with Conditions: The proposal is consistent with the Guidelines and ensures that this historic wall will remain an important object within the Historic District, when combined with the scupper and splashblock condition.
6. The proposed MP is consistent with surrounding historic context, character, and scale of immediately surrounding area and the district as a whole.	Criteria Met with Conditions: The reconstruction, as proposed and with the conditions, is appropriate and important in order to be able to conserve this historic asset.
7. The proposed buildings are appropriately sited and conform to the requirements of Section 153.173 Site Development	Not Applicable: This project does not propose new buildings.

Criteria	Review
<p>Standards and the <i>Historic Design Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>8. The proposed site improvements, landscaping, screening, signs, and buffering shall meet all applicable requirements of the Code and respond to the standards of the <i>Historic Design Guidelines</i>.</p>	<p>Criteria Met with Conditions: The proposed project includes site/wall improvements that meet Code requirements and Guidelines' goals, with the recommended conditions.</p>

Recommendation

Staff recommends **approval** of the Minor Project with condition:

- 1) Structural engineering calculations shall be provided at building permit to prove that the wall can retain both earth and gravel backfill and accommodate the parking surcharge, while meeting the Building Code requirements, to the satisfaction of staff. Should a conventional retaining wall, faced with the original stone, be necessary based on those calculations, then this shall be permitted, with the demonstration that mortar between the stones shall not be visible.
- 2) At building permit, the applicant shall show wheel stops placed six feet back from the top side of the east wall face; greater distances, both east and south, may be required by the structural engineering calculations and shall be made as necessary.
- 3) At building permit, the applicant shall field locate the existing sanitary sewer service line for 40 N. High Street from the existing wall to the main line in N. Blacksmith Lane to the satisfaction of staff.
- 4) At building permit, a utility drawing showing all proposed and existing underground and aboveground lines and poles from each property to the N. Blacksmith Lane ROW shall be provided to staff's satisfaction.
- 5) At building permit, appropriate stone scuppers and splash blocks shall be shown as details. Design shall be vernacular in character, appropriate to the original construction.
- 6) During construction, the exposed sewer pipe on 40 N. High Street shall be rerouted to best meet all current requirements once excavations and work have determined the geologic conditions behind the stone wall. The applicant shall work with staff to determine both the best pipe route and configuration, as well as the best aesthetic solution, including slight wall adjustments.
- 7) The owner at 40 N. High Street, his successors and assigns, shall ensure that the invasive ailanthus trees are pro-actively managed to avoid a reinfestation and resulting negative effects on the wall system.