

# 20-133ARB-INF – HISTORIC DUBLIN STONE WALLS

## Summary

Request for informal review and feedback on the installation of stone walls along S. High Street from Bridge Street to John Wright Lane.

## Site Location

S. High Street between Bridge Street and John Wright Lane.

## Property Owner

City of Dublin

## Applicant/Representative

Dana L. McDaniel, City Manager, City of Dublin

## Applicable Land Use Regulations

Zoning Code Section 153.066 and  
*Historic Dublin Design Guidelines*.

## Case Manager

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## Next Steps

Upon receipt of informal review and feedback by the Architectural Review Board, the applicant will need to obtain approval by City Council.

## Zoning Map



# 1. Context Map



20-133  
Informal Review  
Historic Dublin Stone Walls  
South High Street

0 75 150  
Feet

A north arrow symbol consisting of a vertical line with an arrowhead pointing up, and a circle containing the letter 'N' to its right.

## 2. Overview

### Background

On January 17, 2020, the Community Development Committee (CDC) of Council reviewed plans for improvements along S. High Street. As part of that discussion, the Committee expressed interest in extending an existing stone wall along the west side of S. High Street to the south, as part of the S. High Street treescape improvement project. The Committee was supportive of exploring the expansion of stone walls, with the intention of providing additional seating opportunities, as well as landscape opportunities throughout the corridor. The Committee also expressed an interest in studying additional sites where new walls could be located along the street.

An update on this discussion was provided to City Council on February 10, 2020. Following that, members of the Community Development Committee visited the area along S. High Street with staff from Parks and Recreation, Forestry, and Engineering to assess the area and the proposed improvements, which include significant changes to the trees and landscape along the street.

On July 27, 2020, the Parks and Recreation Department presented City Council with an update on the progress of the S. High Street improvements, which included the overall streetscape improvements with proposed landscape material and the proposed stone walls. City Council confirmed staff's recommendation to proceed with the improvements and requested that the Architectural Review Board review the stone wall details and provide informal feedback.

At the August 28, 2020 ARB meeting, the Board provided non-binding feedback on the proposed stone walls. While the Board acknowledged that there was a functional purpose for the stone walls, the members had a number of concerns. These concerns included the potential tripping hazard created by the lip of the walls along the sidewalk, the perception that the walls divert attention away from the building envelope created by the historic buildings in the district, and that the walls contributed to a faux historicism, potentially creating history where it did not originally exist.

### Site Characteristics

#### *Natural Features*

The site contains significant grade change between the sidewalk and curb. The proposal includes modifications to existing grades required to provide proper soil volumes for large street trees.

#### *Historic and Cultural Facilities*

There are a number of stone relics along the S. High Street corridor, which will be preserved with the proposed improvements, including two carriage steps, and a hitching post in obelisk style. The intent is that the resources will remain in same general location with movement to allow for changes in grade.

#### *Surrounding Land Use and Development Character*

This stretch of South High Street is located within the right-of-way with properties adjacent zoned BSD-HC: Bridge Street District, Historic Core at the northern portion of the impacted area and BSD-HS: Bridge Street District, Historic South at the southern portion of the impacted area.

The general character is small cottage style commercial buildings with a mix of retail and restaurant uses, and including a limited number of residences.

#### *Road, Pedestrian and Bike Network*

The site encompasses a portion of S. High Street between Bridge Street and John Wright Lane. There are brick sidewalks provided along both the east and west sides of S. High Street.

#### *Utilities*

Public utilities, including gas, electric, water and sanitary, are provided along the entire length of S. High Street impacted by this proposal.

### **Proposal**

The proposal is for the installation of new stone walls in various locations along the S. High Street corridor between Bridge Street and John Wright Lane. Additionally, a suspended pavement system will be installed under portions of the street and parking areas to increase the tree lawn soil volume needed to support large trees. The new retaining walls will facilitate the tree's access to new soil, by lowering the plants to street level. This will ultimately result in the ability to plant a healthy, homogenous tree lined street as identified by the Community Development Committee (CDC).

#### *Phasing*

The project will be broken into phases of implementation, with the main focus on replacing trees removed recently and then replacing the remaining trees as they decline. The initial phase will be focused on the west side of the street, where most of the street trees were removed by AEP due to power line interference. The walls proposed in this initial phase will be limited to creating tree wells where the existing sidewalk is higher than S. High Street. The purpose of the walls is to retain the existing sidewalk at its current level while allowing the trees to be lowered to curb height for access the soil under the pavement. These walls may also provide a seat wall along the street for people to utilize.

Concurrently, the City of Dublin's Engineering Division is working on a project to remove the AEP power lines and poles from S. High Street in the next couple of years. As the trees will take at least 5-8 years to grow tall enough to interfere with the power lines again, the lines will be relocated before that can occur.

The second phase, which will be scheduled at a future date, would be to replace other trees that are declining. Parks Staff has indicated that, based on the discussion at the first Informal Review, the stone seat walls on the east side of the street are not necessary. However, there is an opportunity that stone landscape bed outlines could be installed to mimic the design on the west side of S. High Street.

#### *Stone Wall Concepts & Options*

The applicant has provided three new concepts for consideration since the August 28<sup>th</sup> ARB meeting. Each design consist of two options; a joined option where adjacent trees could be grouped into longer sections of stone wall where possible, and a separated option where individual trees are surrounded by a smaller stone walls. All the proposed designs are capped with a stone cap. The design concepts are as follows:

- Design Concept A is a stone wall with 90-degree angles.
- Design Concept B is a similar in design to Concept A, except with chamfered corners.
- Design Concept C is a curved design, hugging the landscaped bed.

Similar to the previous proposal, these retaining walls are proposed to be a maximum of 30-inches in height, and will help establish a consistent grade to plant the new trees at a lower elevation.

The new retaining walls will structurally support the sidewalks. The walls are proposed to be constructed of a cast in place concrete core and natural limestone veneer with racked back mortared joints to mimic existing walls in the District. An example of this construction is at the Ground of Remembrance (northwest corner of Rock Cress Pkwy and N. High Street). Due to the retaining nature of these walls and the limited area between the sidewalk and street, dry laid stone walls are not a viable option.

### **3. Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board provide feedback about the stone walls proposed along S. High Street.