

## ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Staff Report

**ADDRESS:** 1675 Broadway Street, Application Number HDC14-235

**DISTRICT:** Broadway Historic District

**REPORT DATE:** November 13, 2014

**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Monday, November 10, 2014

#### OWNER

**Name:** Avalon Second Nonprofit Housing Corp.

**Address:** 1327 Jones Dr., Suite 102  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

**Phone:** (734) 663-5858

#### APPLICANT

David Esau  
Cornerstone Design  
310 Depot St, Suite 2  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 663-7580

**BACKGROUND:** This brick craftsman bungalow was built in 1927 by Michael Elbanowski. It features a large front-facing dormer and gable-roofed wing on the south; four-over-one and three-over-one windows, some with stained glass; decorative eave brackets; and brick columns supporting the gabled front entry roof.

The retaining wall is assumed to have been built at the same time as the house. The driveway and garage appear on 1940 aerial photographs. The portion of the driveway along the stone wall appears to have been dirt until sometime between 1998 and 2002, when it was paved with asphalt.

**LOCATION:** The site is located on the west side of Broadway Street, north of Laird and opposite Baits Drive.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to rebuild a portion of a retaining wall along the driveway on the north side of the lot. The wall ranges in height from 0' at the front lot line to 11' tall at the garage. The stone section to be replaced extends back 61' from the front lot line.

#### APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

**From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:**



- (9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

**From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):**

***Setting***

*Recommended:* Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and landscape features of the setting. For example, preserving the relationship between a town common and its adjacent historic houses, municipal buildings, historic roads, and landscape features.

**From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines:**

**Design Guidelines for Fencing and Walls**

*Appropriate:* Using brick or stone for new walls. Custom masonry products will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**STAFF FINDINGS**

1. The property owners have been concerned about the structural integrity of the retaining wall for at least several years. They had restricted parked vehicles to the front part of the driveway in order to lessen the pressure on the taller parts of the retaining wall. Last winter proved too much for it, though, and a large section of the stone wall washed out.
2. The portion of the wall to be replaced is constructed of stones set in mortar. Current building code prevents the reconstruction of the wall in the same manner. Rather than rebuilding the wall to meet engineering requirements and then facing it with stone, which the applicant has stated is prohibitively expensive, this request has been made to replace it with a modern wall of engineered block with a stamped cobblestone appearance. This is obviously a departure from the traditional look of a stone wall; thus this application has been made to the HDC instead of a request for a staff approval.
3. Per the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, custom masonry will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Though the location and dimensions of the wall will remain the same, the proposed wall would not be mistaken for a historic site feature. The wall is not visible from the south, but is very visible from the north. The building to the north is a non-historic church set far back on the lot. The church driveway parallels the retaining wall.
4. Staff has requested cost information on the proposed wall and a new wall with stone facing. Since the reason for the material change is financial, staff will make a recommendation to the HDC after receiving this information.

**POSSIBLE MOTIONS:** (Note that the motion supports staff findings and is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the

applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 1675 Broadway Street, a contributing property in the Broadway Historic District, to rebuild the stone portion of the retaining wall along the driveway on the north side of the lot. The proposed work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the surrounding resources and meets the *Ann Arbor Historic District Guidelines* for fencing and walls, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standard 9 and the Guidelines for Setting.

## MOTION WORKSHEET

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 241 Murray Avenue in the Old West Side Historic District

\_\_\_\_\_ Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) STATE CONDITION(s)

The work is generally compatible with the size, scale, massing, and materials and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) (*circle all that apply*): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

**ATTACHMENTS:** application, drawings, photos.

1675 Broadway (2007 survey photo)





**City of Ann Arbor**  
**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — PLANNING SERVICES**

301 E. Huron Street | P.O. Box 8647 | Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8647  
p. 734.794.6265 | f. 734.994.8312 | [planning@a2gov.org](mailto:planning@a2gov.org)

**ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION APPLICATION**

**Section 1: Property Being Reviewed and Ownership Information**

Address of Property: 1675 Broadway  
Historic District: Broadway  
Name of Property Owner (If different than the applicant):  
Avalon Second Nonprofit Housing Corp.  
Address of Property Owner: 1327 Jones Dr., Suite 102, Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
Daytime Phone and E-mail of Property Owner: 663-5858 wcarty-saxon@avalonhousing.org  
Signature of Property Owner: [Signature] Date: 10/22/14 org

**Section 2: Applicant Information**

Name of Applicant: David Esau, Cornerstone Design Inc  
Address of Applicant: 310 Depot St., Suite 2, Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
Daytime Phone: (734) 663-7580 Fax: ( )  
E-mail: desau@cdiarchitects.com  
Applicant's Relationship to Property:  owner  architect  contractor  other  
Signature of applicant: [Signature] Date: 10/22/14

**Section 3: Building Use (check all that apply)**

Residential  Single Family  Multiple Family  Rental  
 Commercial  Institutional

**Section 4: Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act**  
(This item **MUST BE INITIALED** for your application to be **PROCESSED**)

Public Act 169, Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act, was amended April 2004 to include the following language: "...the applicant has certified in the application that the property where the work will be undertaken has, or will have before the proposed completion date, a a fire alarm or smoke alarm complying with the requirements of the Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act, 1972 PA 230, MCL 125.1501 to 125.1531."

Please initial here: DJE

**Section 5: Description of Proposed Changes (attach additional sheets as necessary)**

1. Provide a brief summary of proposed changes. \_\_\_\_\_

*See attached.*

2. Provide a description of existing conditions. \_\_\_\_\_

*See attached.*

3. What are the reasons for the proposed changes? \_\_\_\_\_

*See attached.*

4. Attach any additional information that will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate these attachments here.

*See attached.*

5. Attach photographs of the existing property, including at least one general photo and detailed photos of proposed work area.

**STAFF USE ONLY**

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Application to \_\_\_\_\_ Staff or \_\_\_\_\_ HDC

Project No.: HDC Fee Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-filing Staff Reviewer & Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Public Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_

Application Filing Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Action: \_\_\_\_\_ HDC COA \_\_\_\_\_ HDC Denial

Staff signature: \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ HDC NTP \_\_\_\_\_ Staff COA

Comments:

Ann Arbor HDC Application Appendix

Re: 1675 Broadway

October 23, 2014

**Section 5: Description of Proposed Changes**

- 1. Provide a brief summary of proposed changes:** The Owner desires to replace an existing failing stone retaining wall, with a new retaining wall using Redi-Rock or a similar product. Redi-Rock is a pre-cast and interlocking concrete block system with a cut stone appearance, which relies on large blocks for stability to minimize disruption of the site.
  
- 2. Provide a description of existing conditions:** The existing asphalt driveway adjoining the house is supported by a stone retaining wall which varies in height from nothing up to about 11' high. The stone wall has had issues of one or more stones falling out for years, which have been addressed by the owner as well as possible. The intense cold and snow this past winter, however, produced accelerated deterioration, resulting in a large area of the wall failing. The failed area has been temporarily propped up while the Owner decided on a proposed course of action and arranged funding for the work.
  
- 3. What are the reasons for the proposed changes?** As noted, the existing stone wall is failing, and vulnerable to water penetration. In discussions with structural engineer Cheryl Early of Fitzpatrick Structural Engineering, she noted "Pure, unreinforced stone masonry is not documented by ACI as a building material for tension loads – such as we have with the retaining wall." In other words, there are not specific standards that would allow a designer to design a stone retaining wall with predictably safe performance. There are guidelines which can be used for a mass retaining wall using large stones. With a 6 foot tall wall, preliminary calculations determined a roughly 2:1 height to width ratio; that would result in a thickness of 3'-0" of stone to meet current design loads and standards. Again, this is only the 6'0" height; the thickness would significantly increase as the wall height increases. This solution would be both expensive and disruptive of the existing site. The proposed Redi-Rock system reduces the cost and disruption, and provides more predictable performance and safety for the Owner and residents.
  
- 4. Attach any additional information that will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate these attachments here.** We have attached a photo of the existing wall prior to failure, photos of its current state with temporary shoring, and literature about the proposed Redi-Rock system. Drawings are also provided showing the approximate extent of the work.











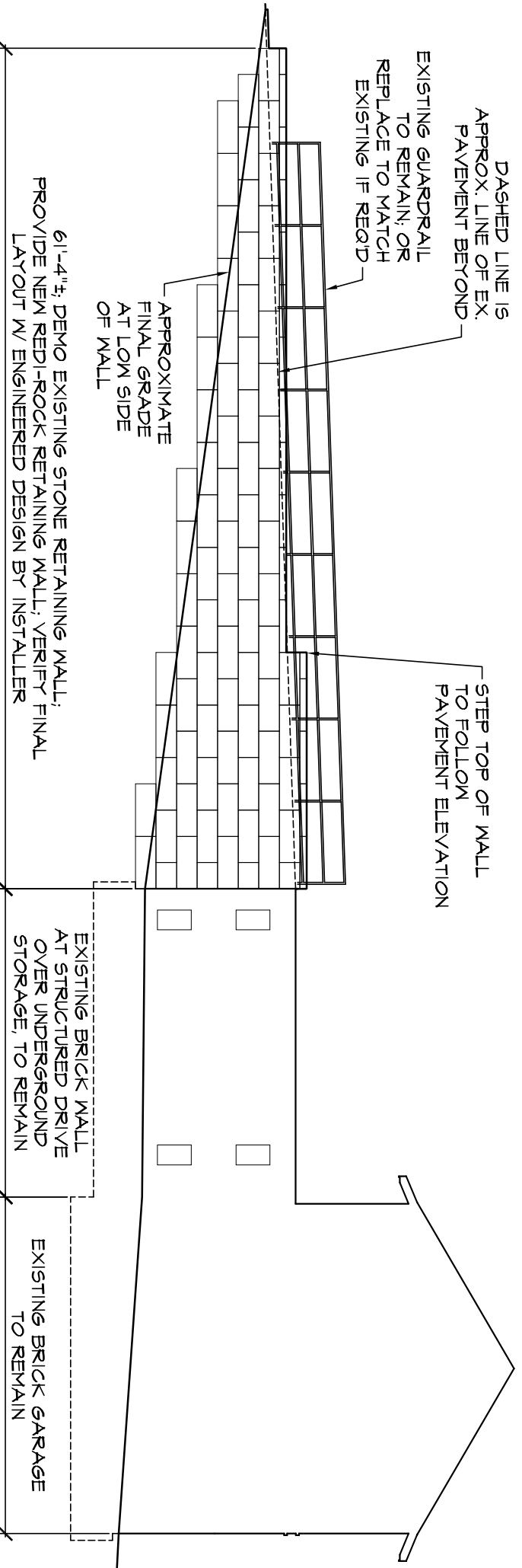






NO  
PARKING  
NO  
STREET  
SIDE





6'-4"± DEMO EXISTING STONE RETAINING WALL;  
 PROVIDE NEW REDI-ROCK RETAINING WALL; VERIFY FINAL  
 LAYOUT W/ ENGINEERED DESIGN BY INSTALLER

CORNERSTONE DESIGN INC  
 734.663.7580  
 CDIARCHITECTS.COM

RETAINING WALL REPLACEMENT ELEVATION

1675 BROADWAY  
 ANN ARBOR, MI  
 AVALON 2ND NONPROFIT HOUSING CORP  
 3/32" = 1'-0" 10-20-14

EXISTING BRICK WALL  
 AT STRUCTURED DRIVE  
 OVER UNDERGROUND  
 STORAGE, TO REMAIN

EXISTING BRICK GARAGE  
 TO REMAIN

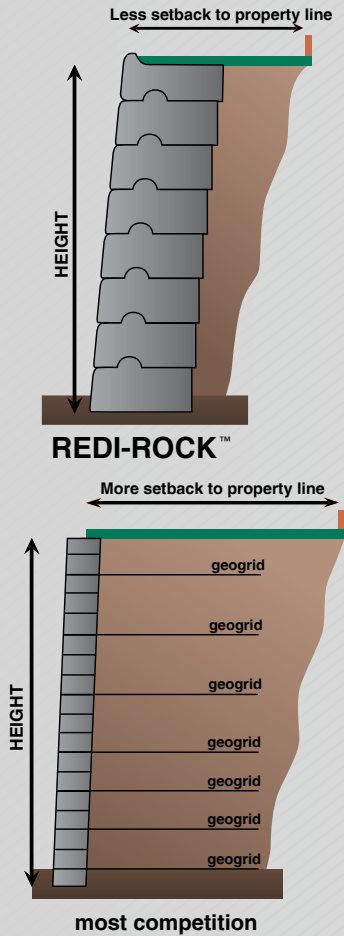




**REDI+ROCK**  
established 2000



### NO GEOGRID OR TIE-BACKS In Many Applications



## THE COBBLESTONE TEXTURE

### The Challenge

Large block retaining walls offer massive benefits, but what if you don't want a massive look in the finished wall? Now, you don't have to choose one or the other.

### The Solution

When you choose Redi-Rock Cobblestone texture, you get the best of both worlds—the structural capabilities of a large block retaining wall, with a smaller-scale look. Each Cobblestone texture block has the appearance of six smaller blocks on each face, giving the walls a polished look that fits well in commercial, residential, DOT, landscaping projects and more.

The texture on each Cobblestone block makes individual blocks nearly indistinguishable in a finished wall. Each block is cast in a mold taken from real stone, using wet cast concrete which gives walls a more natural finish than dry cast blocks, plus durability and strength.

Redi-Rock Cobblestone is the perfect solution for projects that need to look good. Structurally, Redi-Rock Cobblestone blocks are the same as Redi-Rock blocks you have worked with in the past—the same massive dimensions, quality and ease of installation you've come to expect. At one ton each, you can build tall gravity walls using Cobblestone blocks, and even taller walls with reinforcement.

Contact your local Redi-Rock manufacturer or visit [www.redi-rock.com](http://www.redi-rock.com) to learn more about the Redi-Rock Cobblestone face today!



**MIDDLE BLOCK:**  
Weight: 2400 lbs.  
46" x 41" x 18" High  
5.75 sq. ft. of face

