

October 29, 2024
Public Hearing

The current proposal is:

Preservation Department – Item 5, LPC-25-01542

2103 Albemarle Terrace – Albemarle-Kenmore Terraces

Historic District

Borough of Brooklyn

To testify virtually, please join Zoom

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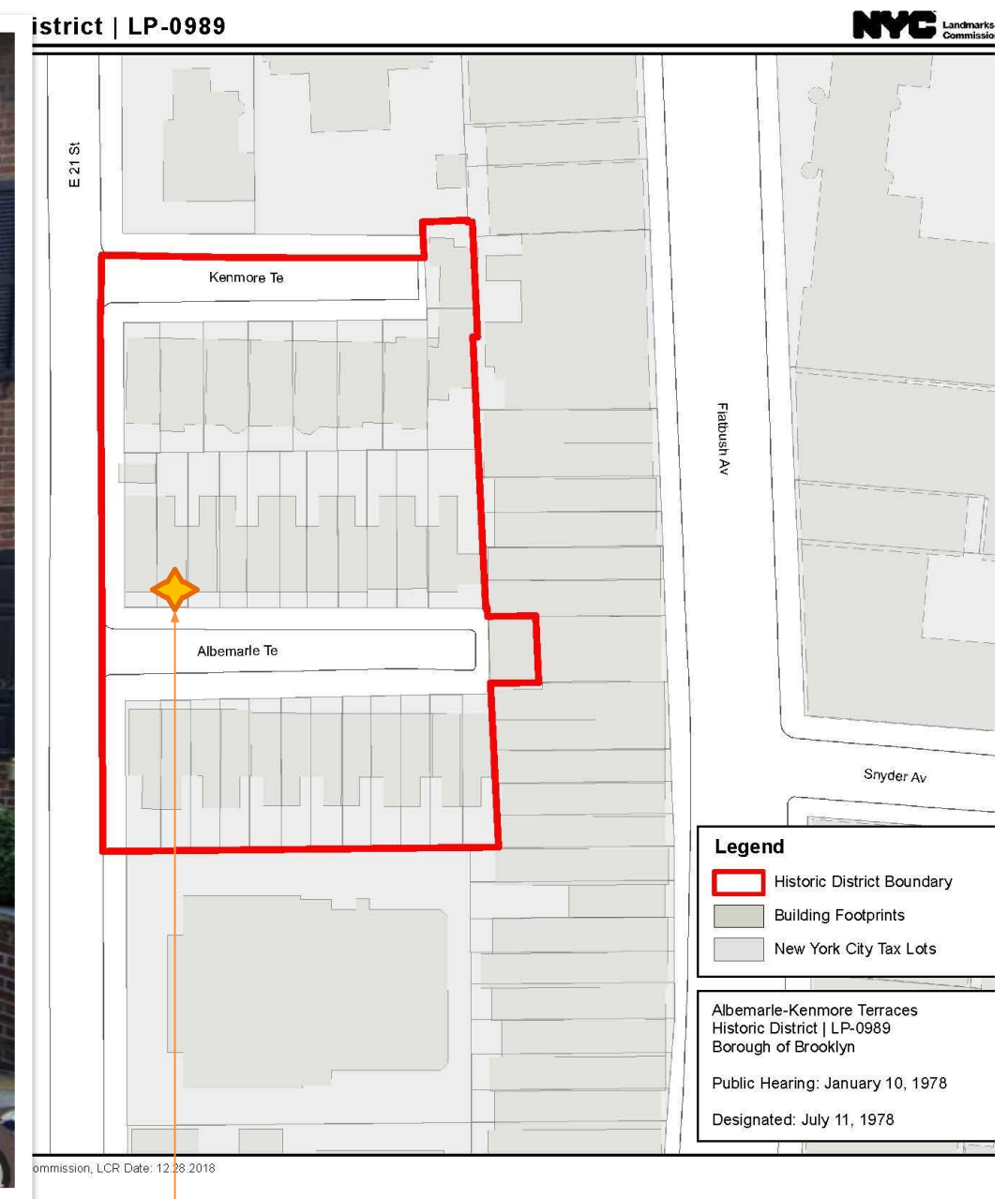
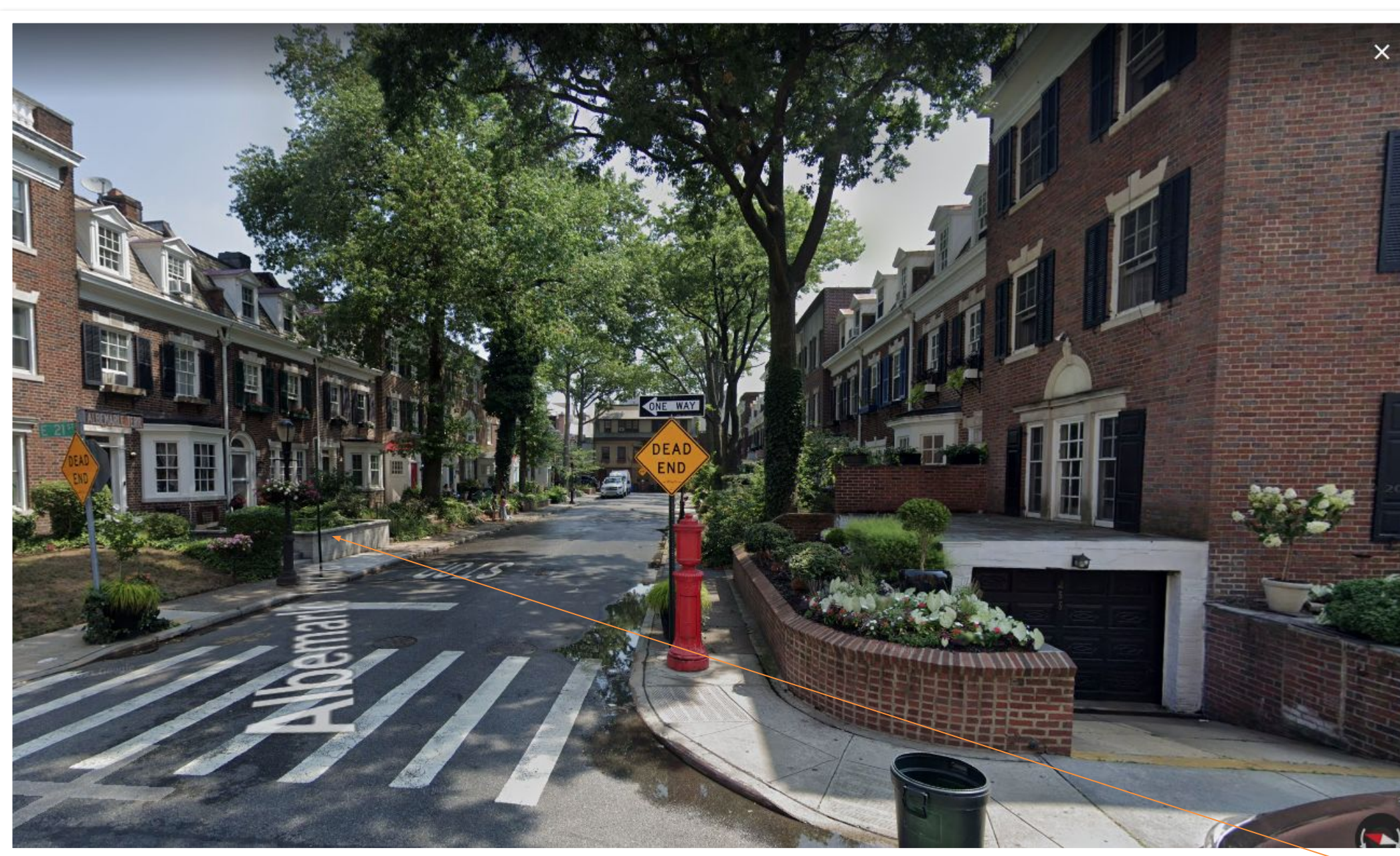
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2103 Albemarle Terrace, Brooklyn

Albemarle-Kenmore Terraces Historic District

Requesting to legalize the construction of a retaining wall

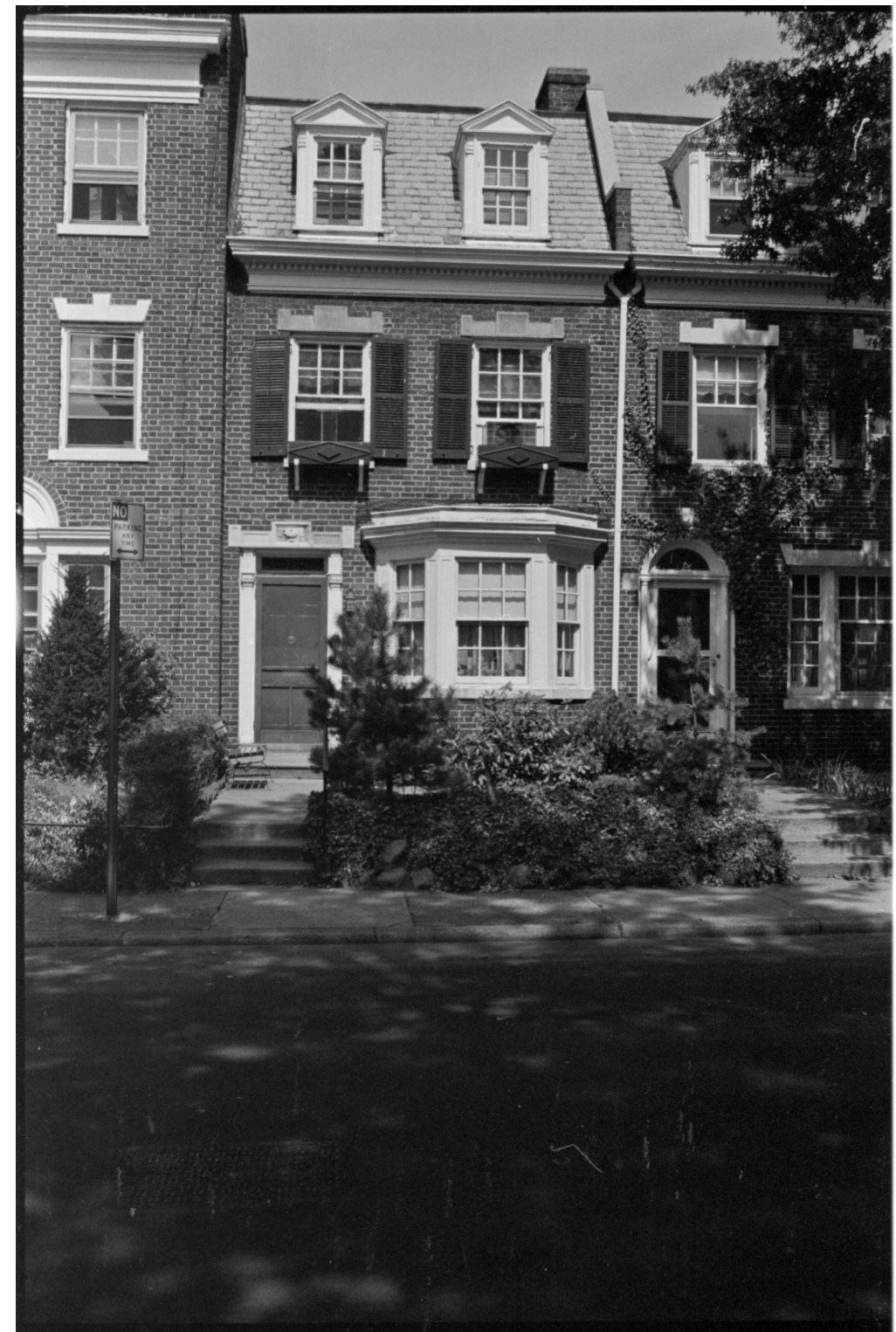


Location of our home

Tax Photo



Designation Photo



Existing conditions of our home

Unaware that Landmarks approval was required for yard retaining wall, we began construction. Picture on left shows before the construction, picture on right show current condition.

Unfortunately, despite providing the survey to our contractor he assumed the entire yard was ours. I brought a surveyor over to confirm and learned that 9" of the yard belongs to the next door lot. Our proposed work includes removing that portion of the wall which is on the neighboring lot.



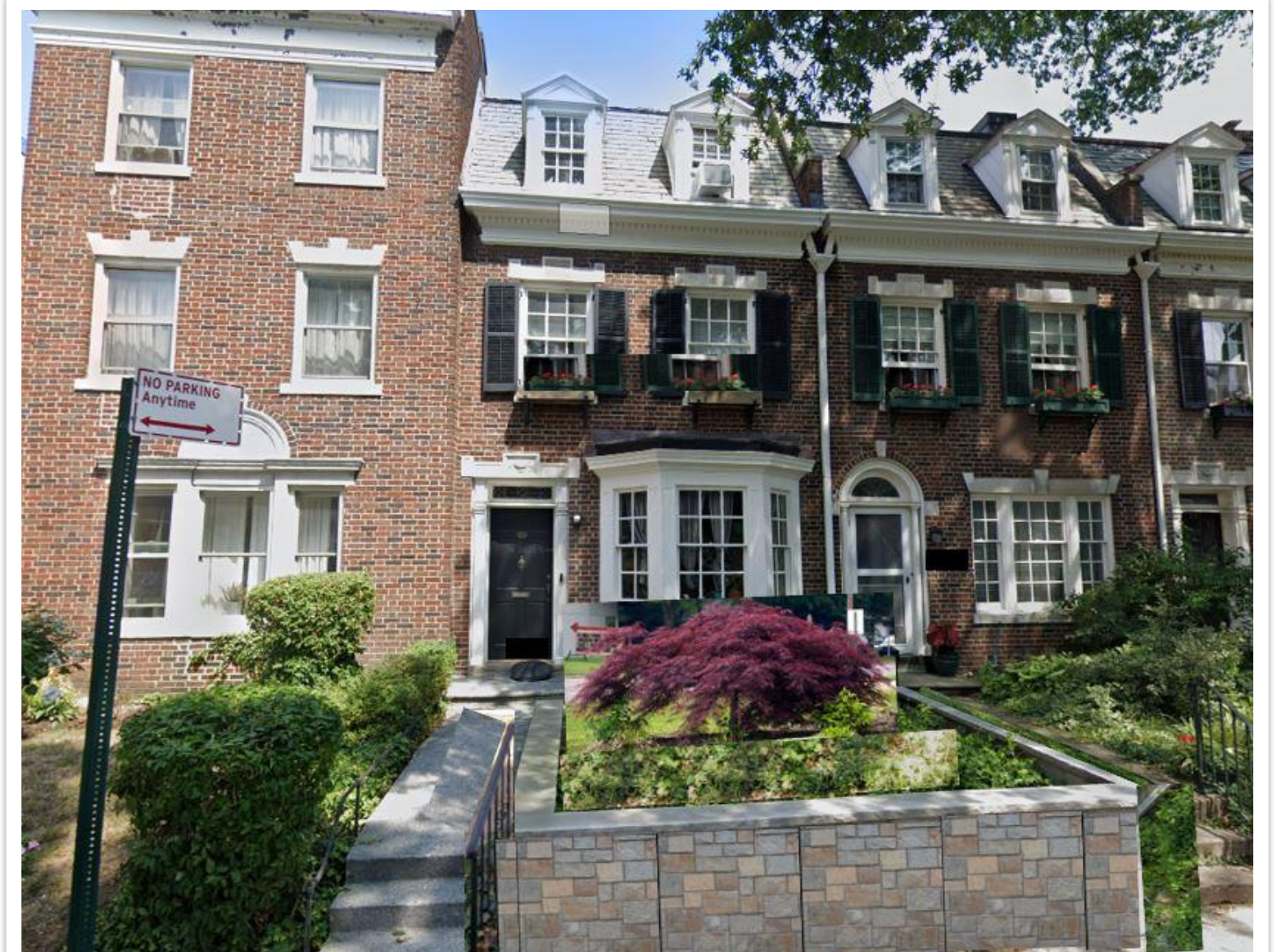
Proposed Work – Historically Significant Local Buildings and Proposed Rendering

We truly believe that a stone retaining wall would be a beautiful, historically appropriate addition the block, will balance out the retaining wall located across the street and create a subtle visual entry to this special dead end block.



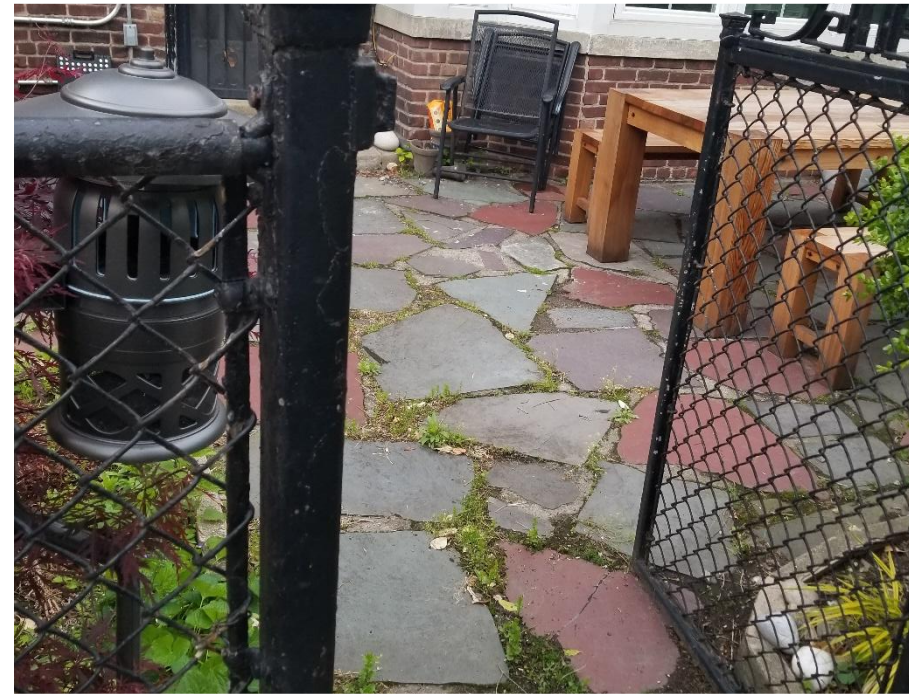
Proposed Work – with Renderings

We would like to construct a retaining wall of natural stone veneer and coping stone. Please see below, on the left a 3-D rendering of what we are proposing and on the right a makeshift rendering using actual photos and screenshots of home and materials.



Our contractor has recommended that we use a natural stone veneer instead of natural stone block. The veneer prevents the possibility of water freezing between the rocks and causing splits and shifting. Veneer would encourage a longevity of its construction. Installation of the veneer requires a cinder block base. Cinder blocks are 8" in height. If we were to do only three courses of the cinderblock the retaining wall would be below the existing walkway, therefore we would like to do a four course block wall for a height of 32" and top it with a 1" rock edge limestone coping stone; which allows for a garden bed perfect for landscaping to the block's beautiful gardening standards, however we would like to hear your thoughts and considerations.

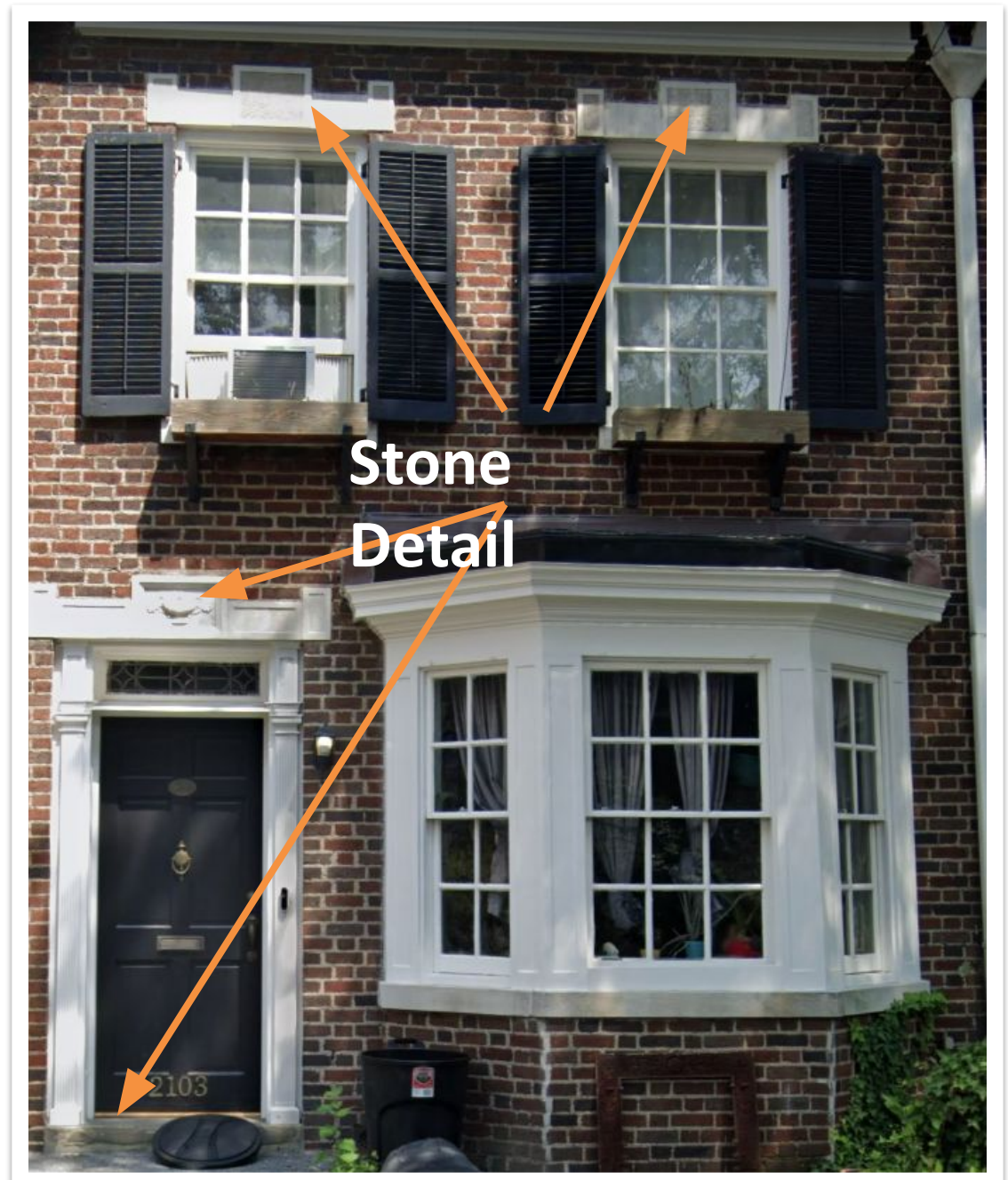
Proposed Materials



<https://stonehengeus.com/shop/natural-stone/english-pattern/shrewsbury-natural-english-pattern-stone/>

Stonehenge Stone in Shrewsbury

Natural coloring, ties into the red hue of the bricks and the slate used in many of the front and back yards of the homes on the block.



Coping Stone

Matches the coping stone toppers other walls on the block, as well as ties in stone detail from façade



LPC provided survey of the retaining walls on the block.

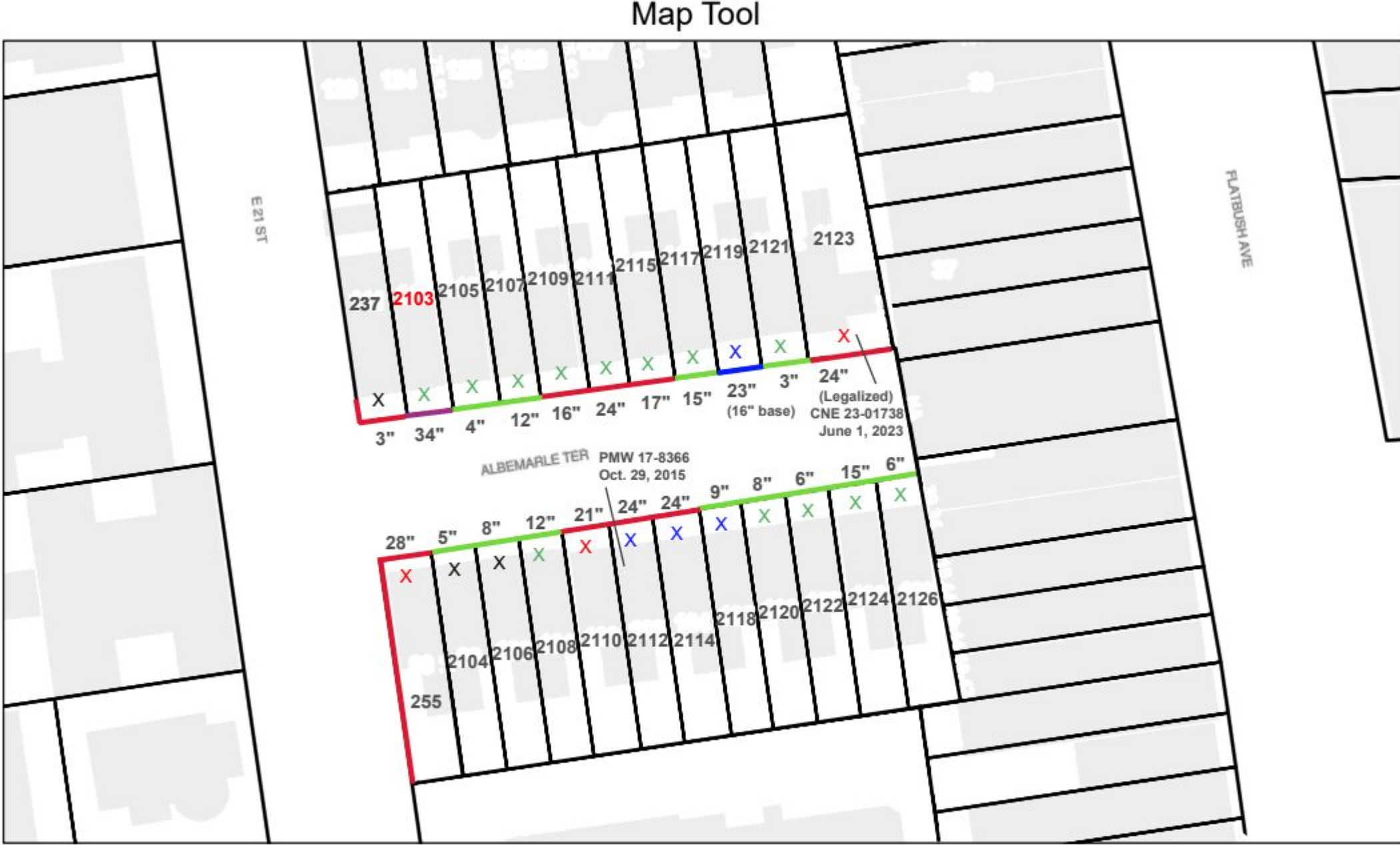
This survey shows that there is a variety of retaining walls on the block - made up of various sizes, material, etc..

Another item to consider as well is the height of the stairs/walkways that lead to the front doors. These decrease in height as you go down the block so visually the proportion between the entry walkway and the height of the retaining wall above the walkway should be considered as well.

For example, while homes numbered 2111, 2119 and 2123 have walls that are a few inches shorter than our proposed retaining wall, they are taller along the homes' walkway than our proposed retaining wall. If we put a retaining wall with a height of 24" it may be shorter than our walkway.

Here are the measurements:

House #	Retaining Wall Ht Above Sidewalk	Retaining Wall Ht Above Walkway
2103	34"	½-1 cinder block
2111	33"	3 courses of bricks
2119	23"	approx. 2'
2123	24"	3 courses of bricks



Legend
 Conditions at time of Designation:
 X Nothing
 X Stone
 X Brick
 X Concrete wall

Current Conditions:
 Proposed CMU with Stone Veneer
 Stone
 Brick/Brick with Bluestone Coping
 Concrete wall with Fence



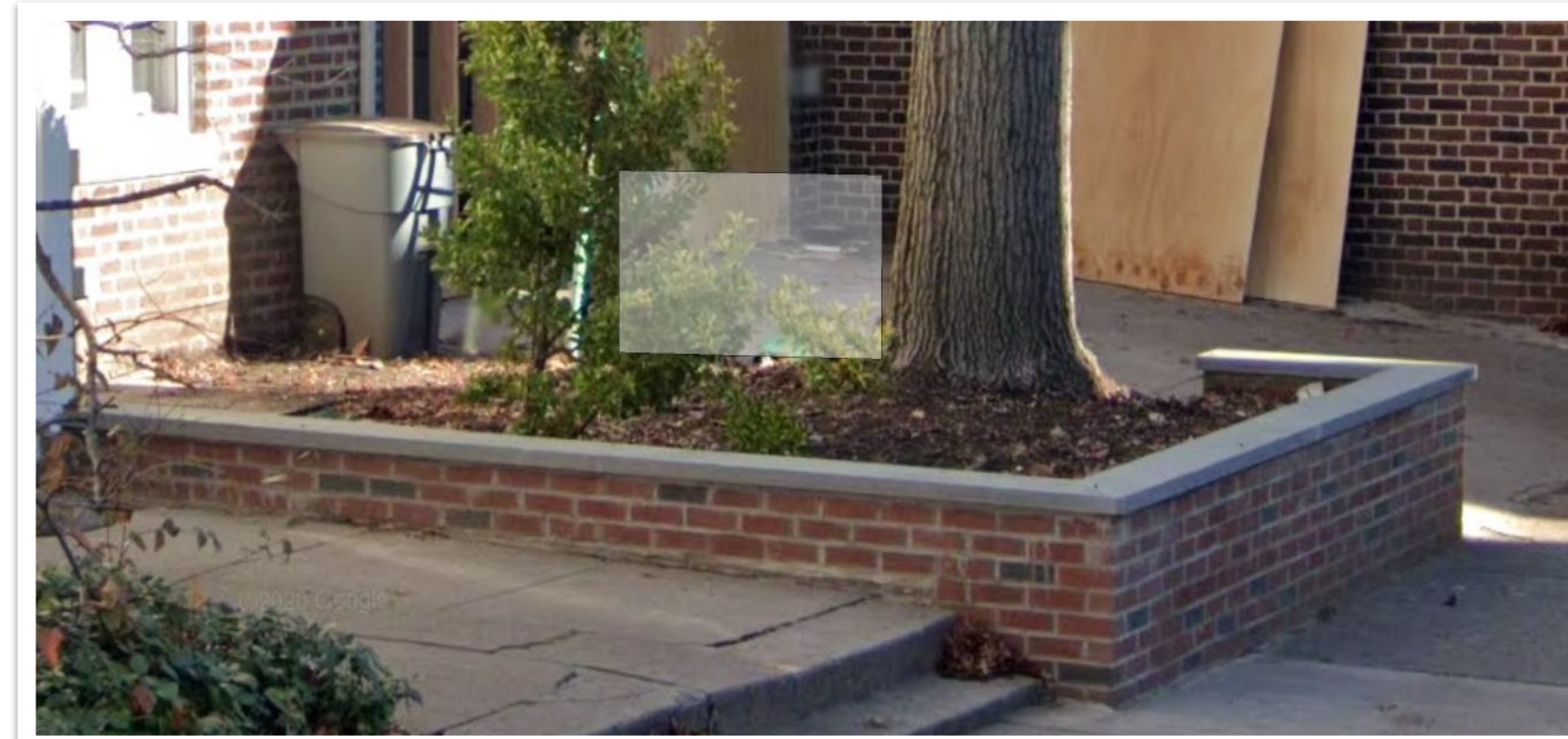
Precedents nearby - Height

2103 Albemarle Terrace, Brooklyn

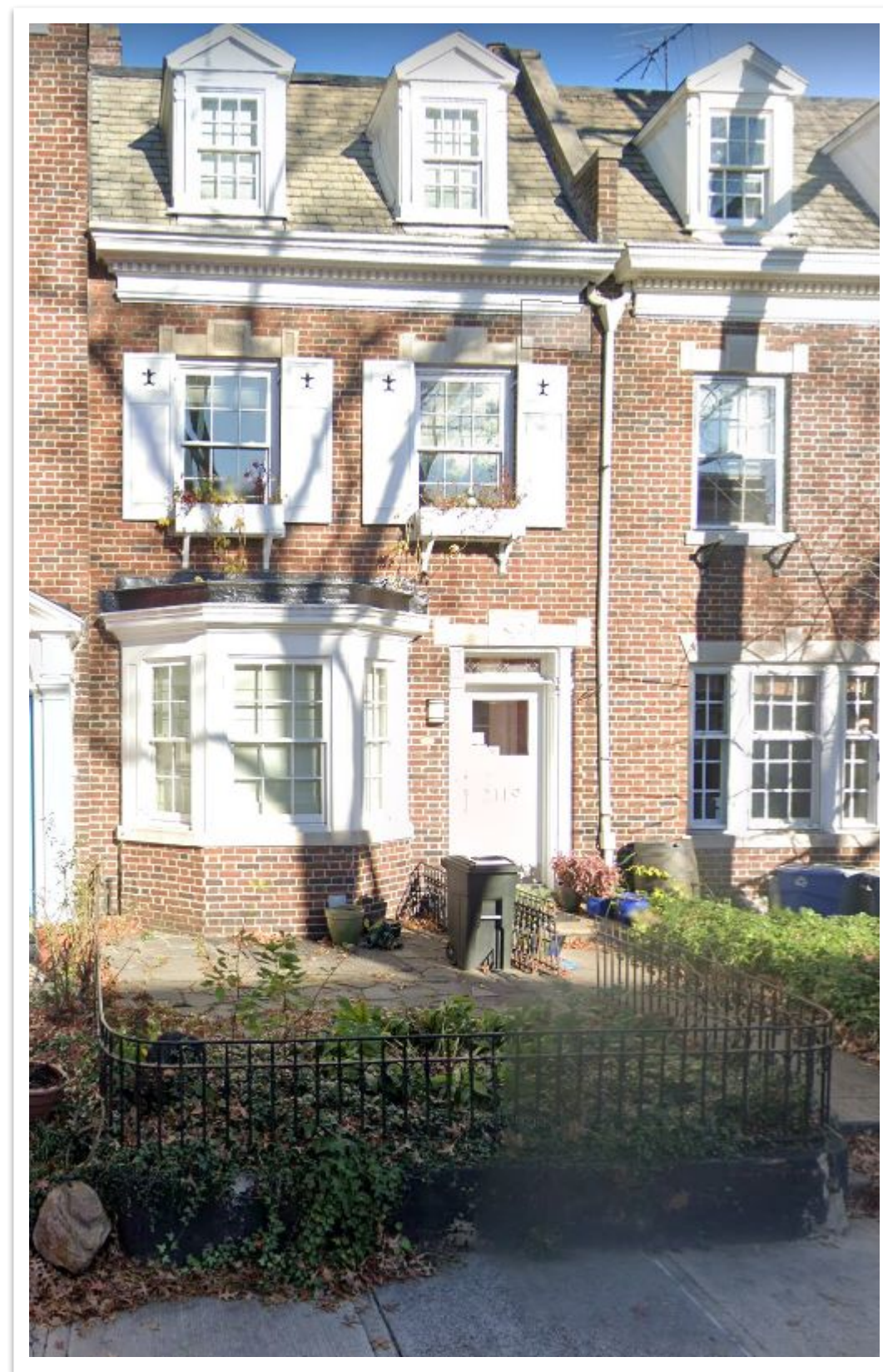
Neighbor across the street – retaining wall goes around entire property and is approx. 30” high



Neighbor at the end of the block, while their wall along the sidewalk line is a little shorter, it's height along their walkway is taller than our proposed wall



One of the charming aspects about these gardens is the inconsistency between yards. Some have chosen retaining walls, while other hadn't; some chose to put pavers on their front lawns while others chose to keep the front of their homes all garden.



Streetscape Photos



Typical conditions in the district

Many neighbors on the block have built a retaining wall, of varying sizes and styles.



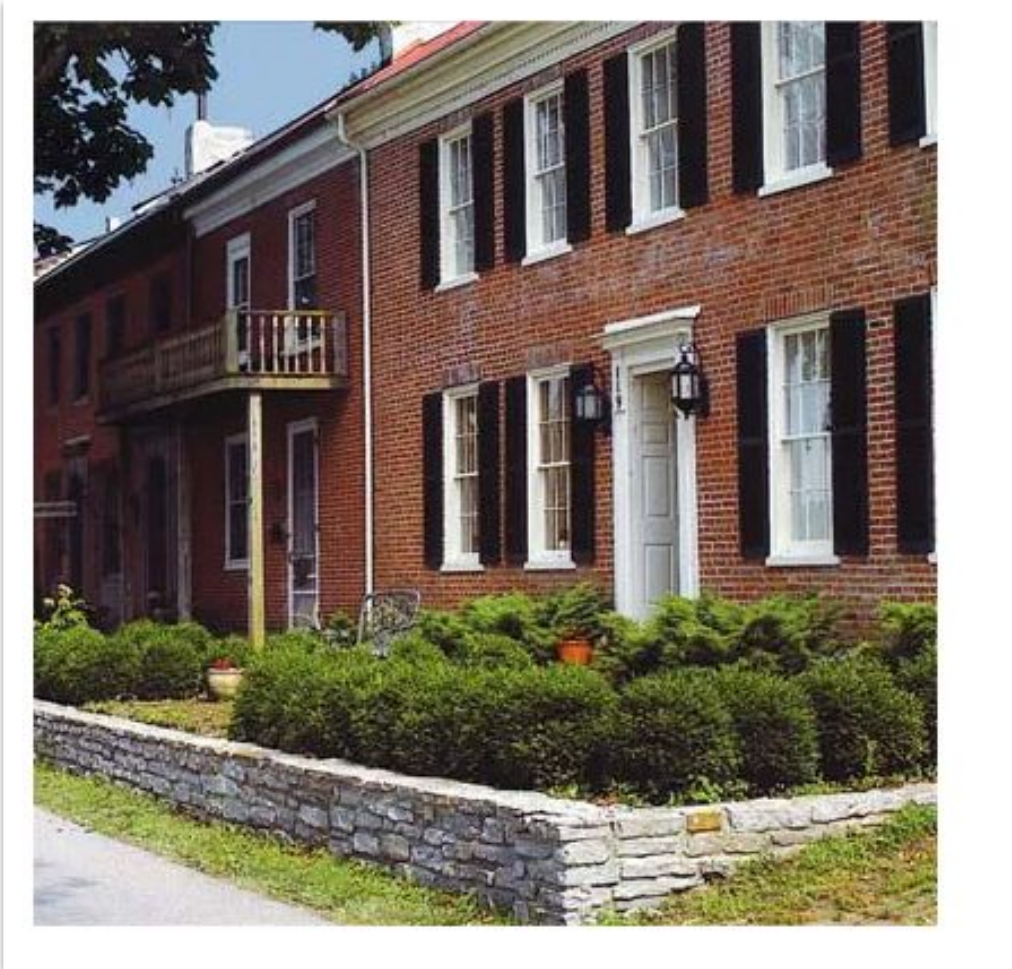
Material Consideration

While some homes on the block have used brick for their retaining walls, none of the walls match each other nor the vintage bricks of the homes behind them. Some are also deteriorating poorly. Our construction will hold up much better; the cinder block and natural stone veneer will withstand the test of time and not be just another clashing retaining wall.



Historic Precedents

Homes of similar style and vintage with stone retaining walls

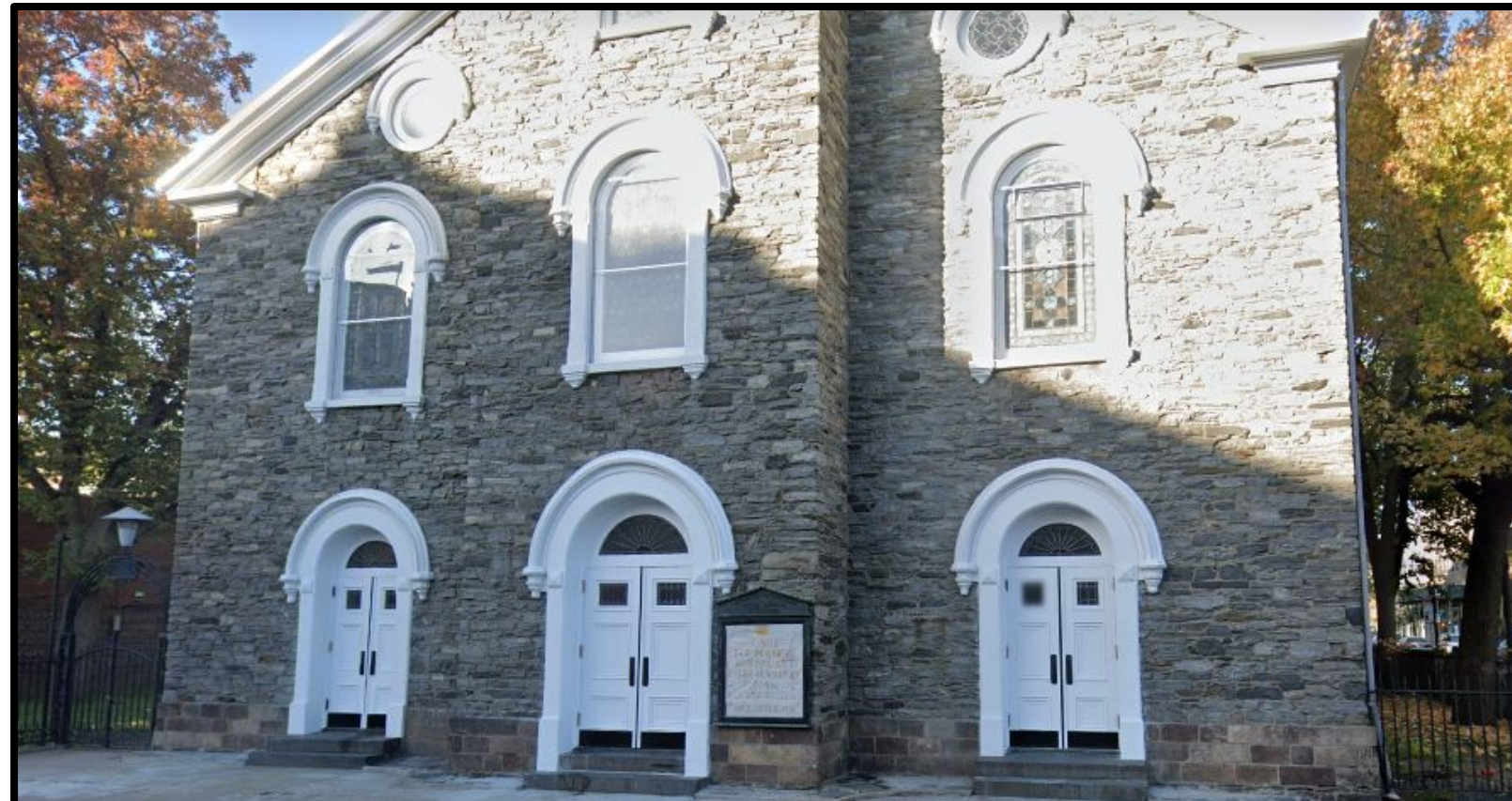
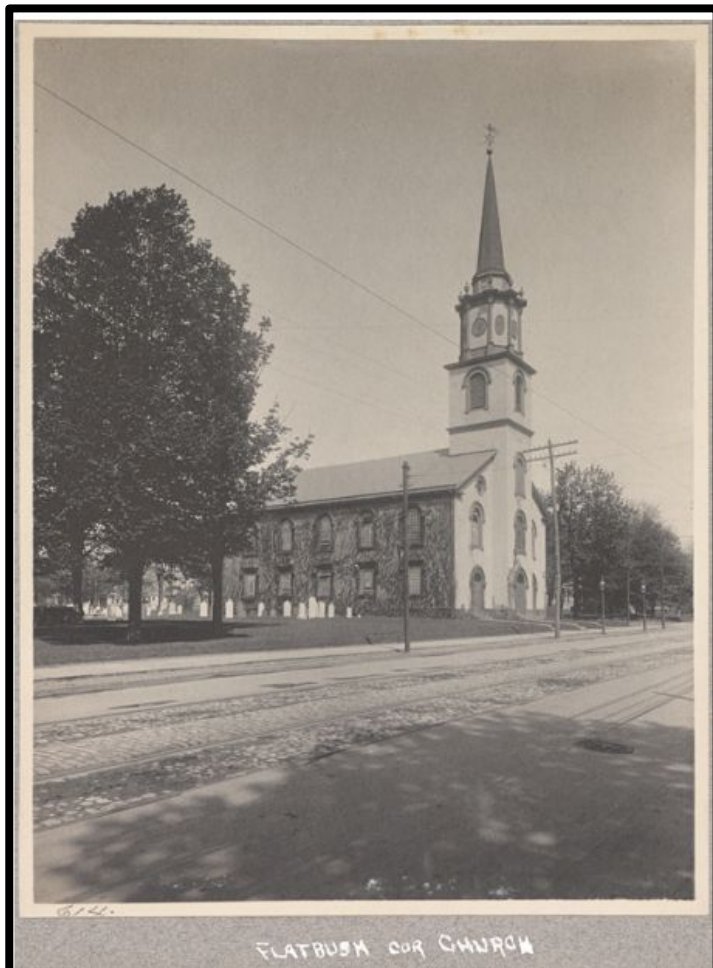


Historical Appropriateness with Neighborhood and Architecture

In 1793 the current church of the first Dutch Reformed Church was built. It is of Federal Style and built of local stone and Holland brick, the walls rest on a foundation made from stones of an earlier church of 1699, which was demolished to make way for the present structure. The Church House was designed by Meyer & Mathieu in 1922. It is a Georgian style structure built of red brick laid in Flemish bond.

The homes on Albemarle and Kenmore Terraces were built between 1916-1929 and are made up of Federal Revival houses, constructed red brick (with occasional burned singles) laid up in the Flemish bond pattern, limestone ornament, white-painted wood trim, an obvious homage to the Dutch Reformed Church.

We would like to stay preserve the intended design and style of the building and the district and the nearby Landmarked church by proposing a stone veneer on the retaining wall.



Historical Appropriateness with Neighborhood and Architecture, continued

We would like to install a natural stone retaining wall, the front of which would measure 33”.

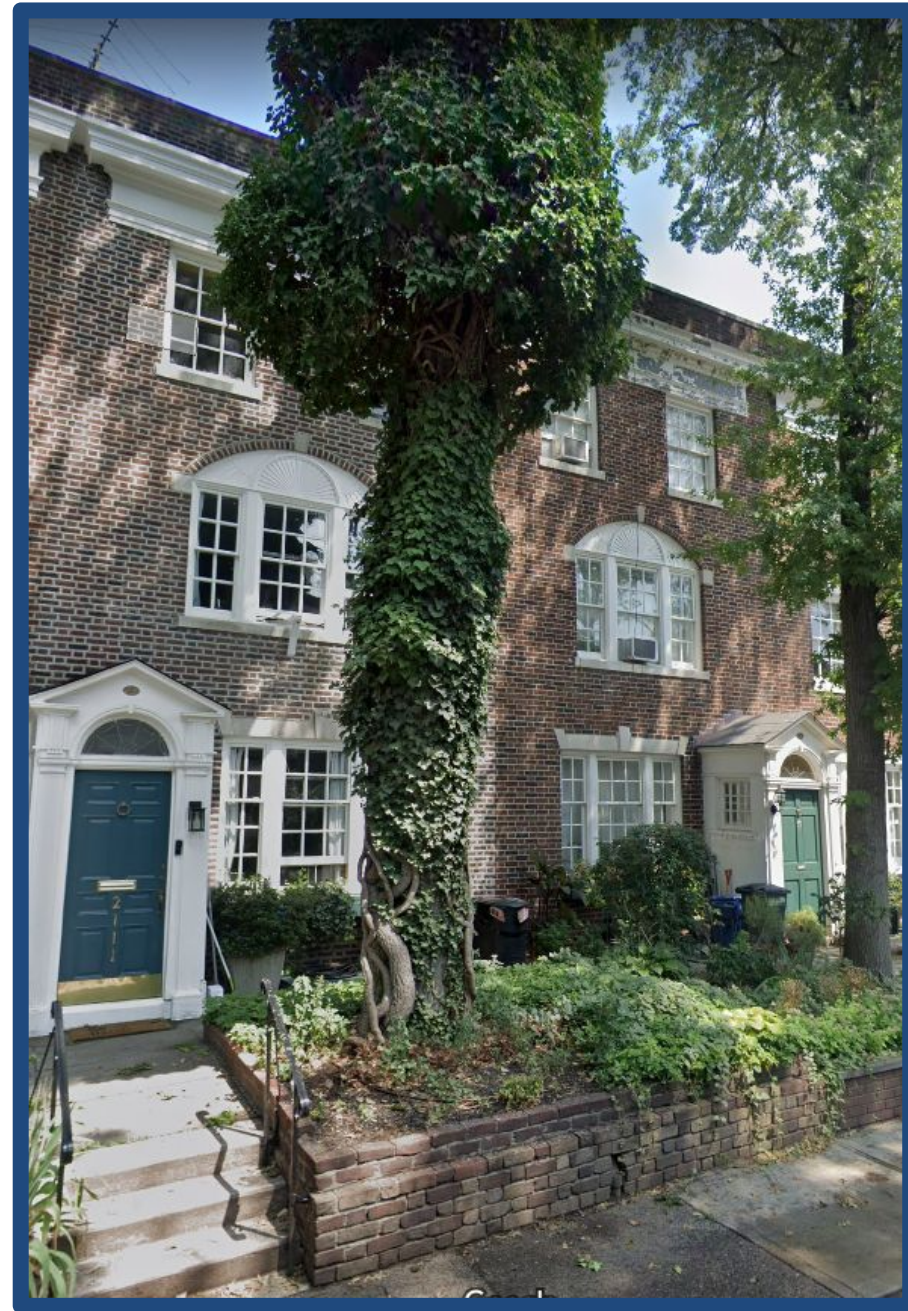
- Using natural rock veneer fits in with, and magnifies, the natural garden look of the initial landmark’s intention while also paying homage to the first school building built just a block away at Erasmus.
- 33” high to better match the existing retaining wall across the street on the corner; together they help to add definition to the dead end block and provide almost like an entryway feel to the Terrace



The natural stone veneer, an ode to the brick base of the original Erasmus school house, located just around the corner from our block. “The two-story building, erected in 1787 with contributions from Hamilton as well as Aaron Burr, John Jay and Robert Livingston, was the first secondary school in New York State and is considered a grand example of Georgian-Federal architecture....”

Height Consideration

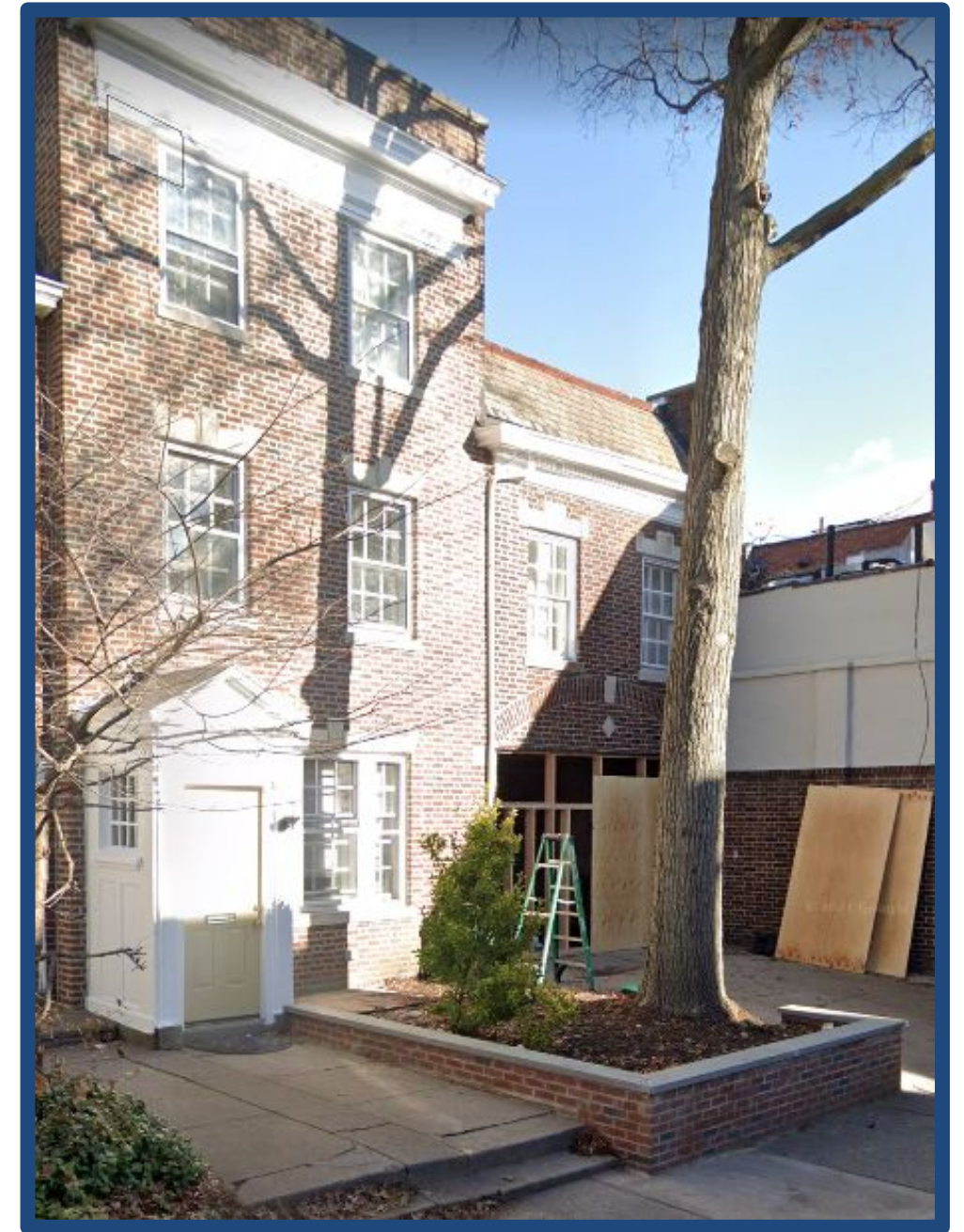
Our proposed retaining wall will measure 34" above the sidewalk and just approx. 6-7" above our walkway. As you can see the entry walkways as you go down the block is lower and therefore while the total height of the walls are lower than our proposed wall, in relationship to their walkways it is the same as our proposed wall. Here are the measurements of other retaining walls on our block. Interestingly, and I wonder if this was deliberate, but, by having the gardens higher at the front of the block and lowering towards the end it creates almost an optical illusion, a perspective field of depth or distance, making the block appear longer than it is.



2111 Albemarle Terrace
Wall Height above Sidewalk: 24"
Wall Height above Walkway: approx. 7-8"



2119 Albemarle Terrace
Wall Height above Sidewalk: 23"
Wall Height above Walkway: 7"



2123 Albemarle Terrace
Wall Height above Sidewalk: 24"
Wall Height above Walkway: approx. 7-8"

Surrounding Conditions

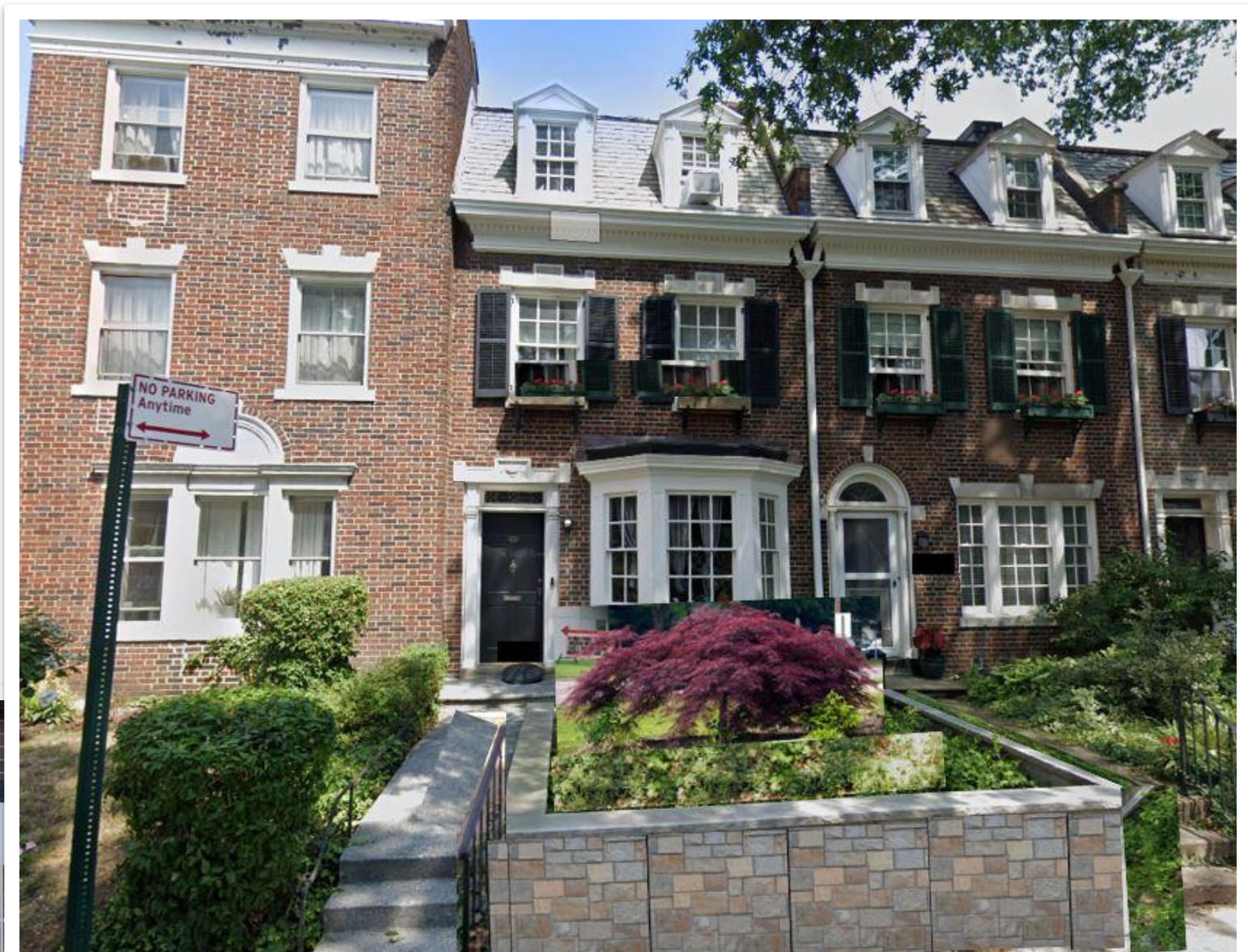
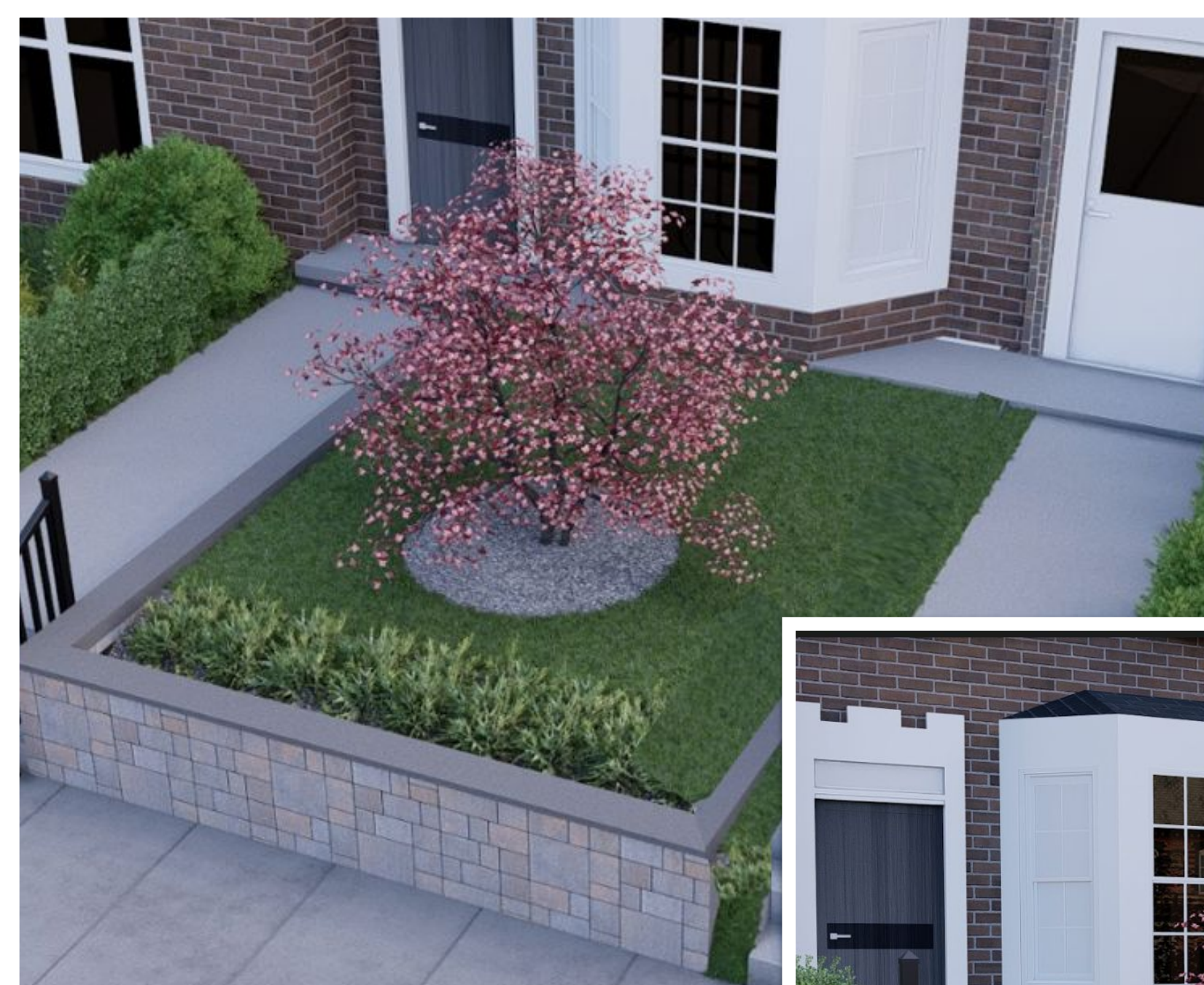


Above is a photo showing our street/block relative to the prewar apartment buildings across the street

Being one of the first gardens on the deadend block of Albemarle Terrace, using a natural stone provides a harmonious transition from the large, variously colored, pre-war apartments building on 21st street and the godfathered-in brick wall/covered garage on the home across the street to the terraces on the balance of our Albemarle Terrace block.



Thank you for your time and consideration of our project!



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