



STAFF REPORT

Historic Preservation Commission

March 5, 2025

HPCA-25-00015

Case Number: **HPCA-25-00015**

Property Address: **536 NW 37th Street**

District: **Crown Heights Historic District**

Applicant: TNT
Logan Roundtree
1000 West Wilshire Blvd, Ste 403A
Nicoles Hills, OK 73116

Owner: Golden Dawn Properties LLC
Doss (Donny) Kimbell
2524 N Broadway, Ste 554 PM 627789
Edmond, OK 73118-7022

A. CASE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Install garage door at historic location (elective);
2. Replace cloth front porch canopy with wood and shingle canopy (elective);
3. Install handrail (elective);
4. Restore retaining wall (elective); and
5. Replace and widen steps at landing (elective).

B. BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The applicant proposes to restore access to the attached garage, construct a canopy over the front landing, install a railing at the front steps, and repair the retaining wall. Light fixtures are proposed at all doors and are included in the administrative approval for openings other than the garage.

2. Location

Project site is located on the south side of NW 37th Street, mid-block between Walker and Shartel.

3. Site History

Date of Construction:

Zoned Historic Preservation/Historical Landmark: 1977

National Register Listing: 1995

Description from National Register Nomination Intensive Level Survey:

536 Northwest 37th, C. 1939. This one-and-a-half-story Colonial Revival (Cape Cod) residence has a steeply pitched, side-gabled roof with composition shingles. The walls are covered with weatherboard and the asymmetrical façade features single hung 6/6 windows, and a paneled wood door with glazing. There are two gabled dormers and integral garage with a lower roof.

Additional Information:

The 1950 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps illustrates a 1 ½ -story, frame, dwelling with 1 ½-story, attached, garage on the west. Roofs are illustrated as shingle, possibly wood. The 1955 edition indicates the roofs to be composition materials.

4. Existing Conditions

The structure appears consistent with the Sanborn maps.

The typical rolling terrace is not fully intact at the front yard as rock retaining walls are present and the terrace is mostly level beyond the driveway and stair.

5. Previous Actions

None.

C. ITEMS IN COMPLIANCE

*Unless noted below in Section D., Issues and Considerations, all other case items of this proposal comply with the Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts, and with all relevant sections of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020.**

1. Item 1) Install garage door at historic location (elective).

- a. Description: The applicant proposes removal of a front, non-historic window where evidence of the original garage remains and installation of an 8-foot by 8-foot, wood, overhead door. The design is modern craftsman in nature and includes windows in an upper row. No evidence of the design of the original door remains. A small light fixture is proposed at either side of the garage door.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*
 - 3.1.14: Remove an inappropriate component or material and restore the original or historic component or material that is revealed by such removal.
 - 3.1.15: New material should match the historic in material type, dimensions, design, configuration, texture, surface coatings and visual appearance.
 - 3.1.16: When a missing or severely deteriorated feature, element, or component is replaced, it shall be replaced in-kind, that is, matching the original in dimensions, detail, size, form, material and finish.
 - 3.1.17: Incompatible non-historic alterations to a historic building are encouraged to be removed, and the building restored to its original appearance during the period

of significance.

- 3.1.18: Renovations previously undertaken may conceal original or historic building fabric. When altering a historic building, non-historic alterations in the area of the proposed alteration should be removed.
- 3.1.27: If replication of original elements is not possible because of a lack of historical physical, photographic or documentary evidence, then a new design that is compatible with the original form, style, and period of the building shall be used.
- 3.1.28: An appropriate option for a replacement feature is a new design that is compatible with the remaining character-defining features of the historic building.
- 3.1.29: The new design of a missing feature shall take into account the size, scale, and materials of the historic building; should be clearly differentiated to avoid a false historical appearance; and should maintain visual attention on the authentic and historic aspects of the building.
- 3.1.30: New compatible designs for missing features should be reversible so that they can be replaced with a more appropriate design in the event that better and more accurate historical evidence becomes available.
- 3.9.13: New garage vehicle doors in all other districts may be solid wood, wood veneer with a concealed metal frame, or composite materials including fiberglass or wood fiber (85% minimum wood fiber content). Doors should first match the historic design. When the historic design is unknown then the doors should match the design of other historic garage doors used in the respective district. A paneled design may be appropriate.

3.11 Lighting

- 3.11.2: The design and materials of lighting fixtures on buildings must be compatible with the historic character of the area and match the style and period of the building.

c. Recommended Specific Findings:

1. That the Standards and Guidelines support a return to a documented historic condition or a design that is consistent with the original intent and character;
2. That evidence of a previously existing garage door exists though no documentation of the design of the previously existing garage door is extant;
3. That proposed materials of the garage door meet criteria for replacement doors; and
4. That lantern style light fixtures at garage doors are common.

2. Item 3, Install handrail (elective).

- a. Description: The applicant proposes the installation of metal handrails at the front steps. The railings will be constructed of ornamental metal and painted black. The railings will be mounted at the top of the landing at the concrete and bottom of the landing.

- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

1.1 Historic Preservation and Design Standards and Guidelines

The City's historic preservation ordinance acknowledges that historic districts and landmarks are valuable assets to the city. The ordinance recognizes that change is important to the community's evolution and an indication of healthy, vital neighborhoods occupied by residents proud of their neighborhood and its history. Development and investment that preserve the historic character of Oklahoma City's historic properties and districts, while also enhancing livability, are encouraged.

3.3 Porches, Canopies, Porte-Cocheres & Balconies

- 3.3.13: The dimensions and proportions of replacement balusters must match the historic porch. The spacing and height of railing balusters is important to the character of the historic building with typically closely spaced balusters and relatively low railings (30" or less in height). Although this height may not conform with current codes, existing historic railings are permitted to remain until they are too deteriorated to be retained and repaired, therefore it is critical to retain the historic porch balustrade and railings.

- c. Considerations: The Standards and Guidelines do not directly address railings where not present historically. The installation of railings where none were present historically have the potential to alter the historic character of a property and to undermine the structural integrity of the fabric to which it is attached via moisture infiltration.

The proposed railing is modest in ornamentation and only 27 inches in length. The proposed feature appears consistent with the existing character of the property and similar installations on the block and does not appear to create a sense of false historic integrity. It is unlikely that despite the front location, that the handrails will be highly noticeable or detract from the historic character of the dwelling.

The installation of the proposed railing is necessary for the purpose of safety and is proposed in such a way as to minimize damage to adjacent historic fabric. The introduction of handrails will enhance livability for the homeowner.

- d. Recommended Specific Findings:

1. That the proposed handrails are modest in both dimensions and ornamentation.
2. That the proposed handrails do not alter the historic character of the dwelling; and
3. That the proposed handrails contribute to enhanced livability for the homeowner.

D. ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

This proposal may not comply with the Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts, and with all relevant sections of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020 as referenced below:*

- 1. Item 2, Replace cloth front porch canopy with wood and shingle canopy (elective).**

- a. Description: The applicant proposes the replacement of a cloth canopy over the front landing with a shed roof style canopy constructed of wood with shingles to match the dwelling.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

3.3 Porches, Canopies, Porte-Cocheres & Balconies

Policy: Historic porches, canopies, porte-cocheres and balconies are important features and are often the dominant characteristic of a building. These features that are visible from the public right-of-way should not be altered.

Design Justification: Front porches and canopies connect a building to its context by orientating the primary entrance to the street. The various components of porches, canopies, porte-cocheres, and balconies, including steps, railings and columns, provide scale and detail to historic buildings.

Sustainability Justification: Porches, canopies, and porte-cocheres protect entrances, provide shade, and enhance a building's energy efficiency.

- 3.3.2: Preserve existing historic front porches, canopies, porte-cocheres, balconies, and their components because they are character-defining features of a building.
 - 3.3.8: Reconstruction of a missing porch, canopy, porte-cochere or balcony is encouraged and must be based on accurate physical evidence of the original or historic configuration, placement and detail of the feature and supplemented with historic photographs that show the original feature.
 - 3.3.9: If no photographs or other documentation exist, the design of a replacement porch should be compatible with the historic building in height, proportion, style, roof shape, material, texture, detail and color. Buildings of a similar architectural style can provide examples of appropriate design.
 - 3.3.11: If more than 50% of a material or component is deteriorated beyond repair, replacement may be required. When new materials may be introduced, there are likely sustainability considerations.
 - 3.3.16: Preserve and maintain original or historic porch ceiling and flooring materials. Ordinary maintenance and repair (less than 50% replacement of an element) do not require review.
 - 3.3.18: Preserve and maintain original or historic porch floors such as wood, concrete or tile. Do not paint, stain or cover original porch floors with "wall-to-wall" or glued down carpet or other surface materials. Area rugs may be used and are non-permanent as long as they are not permanently affixed.
 - 3.3.19: Previously painted porches may be repainted. Property owners should photo-document existing porch before repainting so as to maintain a continuous record of the property.
- c. Considerations: Typically, the introduction of new features on the front façade that

cannot be tied to an historic condition is not appropriate. Said introduction alters the primary façade and may be mistaken as the historic condition.

The dwellings along the block largely have landings rather than expansive porches. Covers at landings along the block are diverse in design and dimension, ranging from cloth awnings, to shed roofs, to gable ends with columns.

No evidence of a previously existing roof has yet been discovered. The dwelling is clad in vinyl, which may conceal evidence of previous conditions at the front entrance.

The applicant is working toward a more comprehensive illustration of the proposed porch and anticipates a continuance. However, the Commission's opinion on whether a cover other than a cloth awning is open for consideration and whether a modest shed roof is appropriate is sought as is any insight related to appropriate treatment at dwellings with similar design details.

d. Recommended Specific Findings:

1. That the existing condition at the landing includes a cloth awning cover;
2. That the historic condition is unknown;
3. That changes to front elevations should be based upon evidence of the historic condition and be appropriate to the architectural character of the structure.

2. Item 4, Restore retaining wall (elective).

- a. Description: The applicant proposes repair the existing stone retaining walls at the front yard. The proposal includes excavation behind the walls, realignment without deconstruction, the introduction of rebar as necessary to stabilize, and back fill with no change to the existing topography.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*
 - 2.5.35: Significant alteration of the topography of a property through extensive grading, removal or alteration of rolled terraces and similar character-defining features, filling or excavating, is not permitted.
 - 2.5.36: Relocating drainage features is discouraged, unless such actions seek to correct poor surface and storm water run-off drainage situations. Storm water harvesting is encouraged.
 - 2.5.38: Landscape elements such as stone or masonry edging materials for raised planting beds shall not exceed 18 inches in height in front or side yards and shall match or complement the design, scale and details of such elements historically found within the historic district.
 - 2.5.2: Historic elements, such as retaining walls, should be retained and preserved.
 - 2.5.14: New retaining walls may be approved to preserve a natural or existing historic slope in the front and side yards only if an earlier retaining wall on the property can be documented.

- 2.5.15: New retaining walls not to exceed two feet in height may be approved to preserve a natural or existing slope in back yards not visible from the public right of way.
 - 2.5.16: The height of a new retaining wall may not exceed the height of the slope it retains.
 - 2.5.17: A retaining wall in front or side yards visible from the public right of way shall be constructed of unpainted natural stone, brick or finished concrete that is compatible in texture, color and style to the main building or adjacent paving materials.
 - 2.5.18: A retaining wall constructed in the side or back yards not visible from the public right of way may be constructed of alternative materials; i.e., concrete block, landscape block, landscape timbers, etc.
- c. Considerations: This feature is presumed to be non-historic, though obviously old, and likely to have gained some historic significance. No new feature is proposed nor is the deconstruction of the existing.

The proposal is before the Commission primarily because excavation is prohibited, and that excavation potentially can destabilize the slope. As a repair, rather than reconstruction, the proposal is a temporary measure. However, maintenance is strongly recommended whenever possible, as stone masonry is an art form that is difficult to recreate.

- d. Recommended Specific Findings:
1. That the repair and maintenance of the retaining wall is necessary to maintain the load as currently existing in the front yard.

3. Item 5, Replace and widen steps at landing (elective).

- a. Description: The applicant proposes to replace the steps at the front landing. The historic condition was likely concrete. The existing condition has an overlay of rock to match the stair at the driveway.

The applicant would like to reinstate rock steps to match the stairs at the driveway and the rock of the retaining wall. An increase in width to five feet is proposed, and rise and run will be corrected to meet current codes.

- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

3.3 Porches, Canopies, Porte-Cocheres & Balconies

Policy: Historic porches, canopies, porte-cocheres and balconies are important features and are often the dominant characteristic of a building. These features that are visible from the public right-of-way should not be altered.

- 3.3.2: Preserve existing historic front porches, canopies, porte-cocheres, balconies, and their components because they are character-defining features of a building.

- 3.3.4: Preserve historic components of porches including steps, ceiling, flooring, railings and columns.
 - 3.3.11: If more than 50% of a material or component is deteriorated beyond repair, replacement may be required. When new materials may be introduced, there are likely sustainability considerations.
 - 3.3.26: Original or historic porch stairs should not be removed. If repair by replacement is needed because the stairs are deteriorated beyond repair, replacement should be in kind. New porch stairs should match the original as closely as possible in appearance, design, size, detail and materials. If new stairs are needed where not located originally, the design should be modest and be appropriate for the style of the building.
- c. Considerations: This feature is presumed to be non-historic. There is evidence in the surrounding paint that the width may be similar to historic but that the height has been altered, likely to accommodate the change to a rock covered feature.

Staff recommends a return to concrete to match the landing floor. However, the applicant proposes that the rock matching the other design components of the front landscape may have gained historic significance and wishes to maintain that continuity.

Though the material is not replicated at the block, the size and shape of front steps varies from site to site along the street face. Correcting the rise and run of the front steps results in a safer configuration. While the change in width is not consistent with presumed historic conditions, the actual historic conditions are not known. A wider step may not adversely affect the historic character of the site as it currently exists. The process is reversible should the documentation of the historic condition ever be revealed.

- d. Recommended Specific Findings:
1. That the historic steps are no longer extant;
 2. That the existing rock steps may have gained historic integrity;
 3. That the process is reversible should the historic condition ever be determined.

E. HPCA-25-00015 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. **Approve Item 1, install a garage door and opening with lighting**, with the specific findings that the proposed work will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property and complies with all relevant Standards and Guidelines and sections of the Municipal Code, 2020*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

Specific Findings:

1. That the Standards and Guidelines support a return to a documented historic condition or a design that is consistent with the original intent and character;
2. That evidence of a previously existing garage door exists though no documentation of the design of the previously existing garage door is extant;

3. That proposed materials of the garage door meet criteria for replacement doors; and
4. That lantern style light fixtures at garage doors are common.
2. **Approve Item 3, install handrails at front steps, with the following conditions**, with the specific findings that the proposed work, with the **agreed-upon conditions**, will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; the items comply with all relevant Standards and Guidelines and sections of the Municipal Code, 2020*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

Specific Findings:

1. That the proposed handrails are modest in both dimensions and ornamentation.
2. That the proposed handrails do not alter the historic character of the dwelling; and
3. That the proposed handrails contribute to enhanced livability for the homeowner.

Condition:

1. That accurate documentation of the installation and dimensions will be provided to staff prior to release of the certificate.
3. **Approve Item 4, restore retaining wall, with unique circumstances and conditions** with the specific findings that the proposed work, with the **agreed-upon conditions**, will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; that the following **unique circumstances** exist; that the items do not strictly comply with all relevant Standards and Guidelines or are not addressed by them, but are nonetheless consistent with the spirit and intent of the Standards and Guidelines and are in compliance with the relevant sections of the Municipal Code, 2020*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

Specific Findings:

1. That the repair and maintenance of the retaining wall is necessary to maintain the load as currently existing in the front yard.

Condition(s):

1. That no changes to topography are proposed.

Unique Circumstance(s):

1. That the repair of the retaining wall does not require deconstruction.
4. **Continue Item 2, replace front awning**, with the specific finding that additional information is required from the applicant in order to determine whether the action requested is consistent with all relevant Standards and Guidelines and are in compliance with the relevant sections of the Municipal Code, 2020*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

Specific Findings:

1. That the existing condition at the landing includes a cloth awning cover;
2. That the historic condition is unknown;
3. That changes to front elevations should be based upon evidence of the historic condition and be appropriate to the architectural character of the structure.

5. **Approve Item 5, replace front steps at entry, with Unique Circumstances** with the specific findings that the proposed work will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; that the following **unique circumstances** exist; that the items do not strictly comply with all relevant Standards and Guidelines or are not addressed by them, but are nonetheless consistent with the spirit and intent of the Standards and Guidelines and are in compliance with the relevant sections of the Municipal Code, 2020*, as referenced in the Staff Report.

Specific Findings:

1. That the historic steps are no longer extant;
2. That the procedure is reversible should the historic conditions be discovered.

Unique Circumstance:

1. That the existing rock steps may have gained historic significance.

Note: Staff recommendation does not constitute Commission action.

**Relevant Sections of Chapter 59 the Oklahoma City Municipal Code governing HP/HL Districts are: §59.3300.1-5; §59.4150.4; §59.4250; §59.7250.1-4; §59.7300.1-7; §59.12200.1-4; §59.13300.1-6.*

Copies of the Standards/Guidelines and Relevant Sections of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020, are available online at www.okc.gov/planning/hp/index.html ; at Planning Department offices located at 420 W. Main, 9th floor, and each HP Commission Meeting.

ADY