

TO: Oklahoma City Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Heritage Hills (Historical Preservation, Inc.) Design Review Committee

MEETING DATE: January 3, 2024

Comments from the neighborhood.

C-23-72638 at 416 NW 29th Street

Although this is outside the boundaries of our neighborhood, Jefferson Park brought this property to the attention of the Alliance of Historic Neighborhoods and asked for our input. We concur with Jefferson Park that the property has been so badly damaged by inappropriate and unpermitted alterations, as well as years of neglect, that the historic integrity of the structure is gone, and demolition should occur. This is also the position of staff. It is very unfortunate that this has happened and illustrates the importance of code enforcement in the district. The damage would not have occurred had the ordinance been followed over the years regarding modifications and maintenance at this address. We must do more to enforce the code in these situations before it reaches this point.

HPCA-23-00136 at 620 NW 18th Street

This is also outside of our area, but demolitions in the district continue to be a concern among all the historic neighborhoods. We concur with staff that the structure can be saved and need not be demolished, though there are clearly non-historic parts of the building that need to be addressed.

HPCA-23-000147 at 108 N.W. 19th Street

All of this work was done without a permit despite neighbors notifying workers that such work requires a certificate of appropriateness. The neighborhood is opposed to replacing original wooden windows. The ordinance is clear that windows should be preserved, and these windows are not beyond repair. Those that have been removed were not beyond repair and should be reinstalled. They were generally intact and operational, with little rot except needing ropes, which are easily replaced. We have seen many other buildings in the district with windows in worse condition that have been preserved with proper repair. The windows that were removed and placed in a dumpster (which broke most of the glass) were salvaged by neighbors and then given back to the workers weeks later after they were cited by the city. Historic windows should not be filled in, particularly on a side visible from the street. Storm windows are always an energy saving alternative.

The pergola is not correct for this part of the neighborhood and was placed on the pad where the detached garage was historically. There are no other pergolas nearby. Construction was completed following notification from the city to cease work and obtain a permit. A non-historic carport violates

the ordinance and should be removed, not improved. There have been multiple code complaints about this property over months. The siding removed was redwood and should be replaced in kind. The owners knew this was in the historic district and required permission for external changes. There is a marker easily visible from the front porch. We urge denial of the application and restoration of the dwelling.

HPCA-23-00150 at 501 NW 15th Street

In the October meeting, when this first came up, the neighborhood supported the staff recommendation for a continuance. The fence had been installed without a permit or certificate of appropriateness. It was then “denied with prejudice” by the Commission on a 6 to 1 vote (Case HPCA-23-00119). Now a new application comes before the Commission. All this time and trouble would have been avoided if the owner had followed the ordinance and received a permit before building. This fence is imposing and highly visible in the neighborhood. The neighborhood is not opposed to the stucco pillars or placement of the fence in a historic location. However, there should be some explanation about how this application is different from the October application, which was already denied, as the fence appears to be unchanged. It is important for the Commission to be consistent as every action sets a precedent. The neighborhood believes the term “unique circumstances” is often overused. An overly tall wooden fence is not unique, and shorter, more transparent fences were much more common historically in the neighborhood over the last 100 years.

HPCA-23-00162 at 112 NW 15th Street

The neighborhood supports the staff recommendation for a continuance. More information is needed.

It appears that neighborhood concerns about excessive parking have been partially addressed by having a two-car garage in all units. Street parking at night is nearly impossible on this block in the evening. The units appear to have three bedrooms, an office, and four bathrooms. They could easily be occupied by individuals with more than two cars. Cars are already being parked across Robinson in the St. Luke’s parking lot from the Aberdeen apartments across the street from this building.

A trash dumpster will be needed at this location, and the ordinance requires screening. Screening should also be done for mechanical units, particularly as these will be visible from the street and alley. More information is needed on fencing. The lot coverage exceeds the 50% limit that is typical in residential areas. Buildings on the block with basements will be impacted by excessive lot coverage. Basement flooding is already a problem in the area and all new construction needs to consider lot coverage and drainage issues carefully to avoid worsening the situation. This lot has been vacant for years and has acted to absorb heavy rains in the past. We urge the applicant to specifically address drainage issues and mark sure all water moves toward the street and not toward the neighboring buildings.

SPUD-01581 at 408 NW 30th Street

The neighborhood concurs with Jefferson Park and Edgemere Park on this application.

The lot coverage exceeds what is typical in residential areas, and the lack of sufficient parking will push cars onto an already congested street. Buildings on the block with basements will be impacted by excessive lot coverage. The setbacks do not follow the rest of the block and the building needs to follow existing setbacks of adjacent structures. The ordinance specifically requires compatibility in this regard. The building should also be limited to two stories. There are no nearby three-story buildings. The Commission needs to be consistent in enforcing these rules. A SPUD should not be used for over building on a lot or violating the Historic Preservation Ordinance. There are three lots here zoned for duplexes. This is what should be allowed on this property. Non-conforming uses by a demolished church should not be used as precedent.

HPCA-23-00115 at 2522 N. Shartel Avenue – Board of Adjustment

The neighborhood will send a communication to the Board of Adjustment supporting the decision of the Commission in this matter. A great deal of time and effort was expended by the Commission at the last meeting on this matter and the Board of Adjustment should not re-examine this case which was fairly adjudicated according to the ordinance. We continue to try and reach the owner to connect them with a possible purchaser who will preserve the historic structure. There are other options to demolition.