



STAFF REPORT

Historic Preservation Commission

February 22, 2021

HPCA-20-00184

Agenda Item: VI.C.5.

Case Number: HPCA-20-00184

Property Address: 600 NW 38th Street

District: Crown Heights Historic District

Applicant: OKC Parks Department
Brandon Boydston
420 W Main, Ste 210
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Owner: OKC Parks Department
Douglas Kupper
420 W Main Street, Ste 210
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

A. CASE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Install new sidewalks (elective);
2. Install park benches (elective);
3. Install galvanized handrails (elective); and
4. Install lights (elective).

B. BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The applicant proposes installation of sidewalks and associated amenities in Crown Heights Park.

2. Location

Project site is located between NW 38th Street, Shartel and Walker, and is north of the back yards of those dwellings that front on to NW 37th Street. The park then crosses to the south and west at the intersection of NW 37th and Shartel.

3. Site History

Date of Construction: N/A

Zoned Historic Preservation/Historical Landmark: 1977

National Register Listing: 1995

Description from National Register Nomination Intensive Level Survey:

West of North Shartel Avenue, between Northwest 36th and Northwest 37th, Crown Heights Park (west section), 1931. This park consists of 24 lots in the first Crown Heights Addition, which G. A. Nichols sold to the city in April 1931, shortly after platting. None of the lots were developed with buildings. The park is gently rolling, mostly open with a few old trees, with a tributary of Deep Fork Creek running through it. There is a group of non-original playground equipment, consisting of swings, a climbing set, and a slide.

4. Existing Conditions

Crown Heights park has few paved areas and minimal lighting. Limited fixed amenities exist, and the park is largely open activity space. Those light fixtures existing within the park are non-historic. The properties north of the park and the median to the west have some lights that establish some historic character that may be relevant.

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.**

None.

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 1, Install new sidewalks (elective); 2, Install park benches (elective); 3, Install handrails (elective); and 4, Install lights (elective).

- a. Description: The City of Oklahoma City proposes improvements within the park that include new sidewalks on the outer perimeter and along the creek in the SW section with integral color, Rosemary; park benches; galvanized handrails, and solar lights on poles.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

2.9 Public Property and Right-Of-Way Improvements

Policy: The public spaces within historic districts; for example streets, sidewalks, parks and parkways; are character-defining features and should be preserved and maintained. The City of Oklahoma City, utility companies, historic property residents, and historic property owners all play roles in maintaining these features; and the introduction of new features should be as compatible as possible with the historic districts.

Design Justification: The existing concrete streets and sidewalks are important character defining features of the city's historic districts. The introduction of new elements in the districts such as utility meters, switching boxes or postal service

mailboxes should be carefully considered for compatibility with the streetscapes and overall character of the historic properties and districts.

Sustainability Justification: Maintaining parks and parkways provides permeable ground surface for rain absorption and plants for carbon dioxide generation and publicly accessible shade.

- 2.9.1: By definition, streetscape improvements are actions beyond maintenance and have the potential to alter important characteristics of the site and setting of a historic district and property. Whenever new materials, components, or features are proposed, there will likely be sustainability considerations.
- 2.9.2: Plans for any proposed changes to or in the public right of way in or surrounding historic districts or properties, including those of telecommunications or utility providers and changes to street locations and sizes, must be submitted for review and approval using the standard application and process for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- 2.9.3: Planning Department staff will determine the impact on the character of the historic property and district, compatibility with preservation policy and the provisions of these Standards and Guidelines, and compliance with the applicable portions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance included in Chapter 59 of the Municipal Code.
- 2.9.4: Utility components such as meters, transformers, switching boxes and other such elements must be located at the back of properties as far away as possible from sidewalks, curbs and curb cuts; of minimal height; painted to blend with the immediate environment and screened with appropriately scaled landscaping.
- 2.9.5 Plans for proposed demolition, changes or new construction in parks or playgrounds, including playground equipment, fences, picnic shelters or other structures must be submitted for review and approval using the standard application and process for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- 2.9.6 Planning Department staff will confer with Parks and Recreation Department staff and the Park Commission in deciding the impact of proposed changes on the character of a historic property and district, compatibility with preservation policy and the provisions of these Standards and Guidelines, and compliance with all applicable ordinances.
- 2.9.7: Any proposed demolition or construction of buildings in a park must comply with the “Alterations” and “New Construction” sections of these Standards and Guidelines.
- 2.9.9: Retain and maintain historic light fixtures in the public right-of-way. They may be refurbished and re-lamped to accommodate modern lighting requirements and equipment.
- 2.9.10: Lighting in the public right of way shall be uniform, and new fixtures

should be compatible with the style, age and character of the district without creating a false sense of historicism. New lighting shall be compatible with existing historic lighting that remains.

- 2.9.11: Some proposed actions could have more drastic effects on the appearance of a historic site or district as a whole. These actions require the filing of an application of a Certificate of Appropriateness and review by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- 2.9.12: Neither existing street pavement widths nor existing street right of way widths may be increased or decreased except by review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- 2.9.13: Street medians or esplanades may not be added or removed except by review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission.

- c. Considerations: Paving located interior to the park may have little visible affect on the district as a whole or the block as viewed from the street. The streets around the park have no sidewalks. Introduction of sidewalks and trails should support the continuity of the historic character of the district.

Eleven black, metal benches are proposed on paved surfaces around the perimeter of the park and the perimeter of the southwest section of park. There appear to be a mixture of metal and wood and concrete seating features in the park. It is not clear if these will remain or are being replaced.

Handrails are proposed at various locations and are described as galvanized or galvanized with powder coat. There are a variety of features in the park such as back stops with poles and fencing materials, guard rails at the creek, light poles, sign poles, etc. that may be galvanized metal.

The City proposes additional light fixtures within the park that are solar powered. The proposed lights will dim to 30% at 11:00 p.m. to reduce light pollution but are motion activated. The proposed lights and poles do not appear to have any commonality with existing historical light fixtures along NW 38th, in the medians at Shartel, or along Walker. As lights within the park do currently exist, the proposed fixtures will be spaced to ensure that excess light does not occur. Light fixtures are proposed primarily toward the interior of the park and the applicant indicates the intend is for them to be minimal in their visual impact on the park. The criteria in the Standards and Guidelines indicate that lighting shall be uniform.

- d. Recommended Specific Findings:

1. That the introduction of new features should be as compatible as possible with the historic districts;
2. That introduction of sidewalks and trails alter the characteristics of the site and setting of the historic property;
3. That the proposed paving is an integral color and paving color choice is Rosemary;
4. That paving should have an aged appearance to match existing;

5. That lighting in public rights of way shall be uniform and new fixtures should be compatible with the style, age and character of the district without creating a false sense of historicism;
6. That new lighting shall be compatible with existing historic lighting that remains;
7. That benches are limited in number and not clearly illustrated as compatible with existing similar features;
8. That it is not clear that proposed improvements provide for uniformity and compatibility with existing features.

E. HPCA-20-00184 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. Approve Items 1, Install new sidewalks (elective); 2, Install park benches (elective); 3, Install handrails (elective); and 4, Install lights (elective), 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 introduction of new features should be as compatible as possible with the historic districts;
- 2) That introduction of sidewalks and trails alter the characteristics of the site and setting of the historic property;
- 3) That the proposed paving is an integral color and paving color choice is Rosemary;
- 4) That paving should have an aged appearance to match existing;
- 5) That lighting in public spaces shall be uniform and new fixtures should be compatible with the style, age and character of the district without creating a false sense of historicism;
- 6) That new lighting shall be compatible with existing historic lighting that remains;
- 7) That benches are limited in number and not clearly illustrated as compatible with existing similar features;
- 8) That it is not clear that proposed improvements provide for uniformity and compatibility with existing features.

Conditions(s):

- 1) That metal features must be in a uniform, painted finish and not galvanized;
- 2) That documentation clearly illustrating what existing features are to be removed or replaced be submitted to staff for inclusion in the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Note: Staff recommendation does not constitute Commission action.

**Relevant Sections of the 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 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.

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