



# STAFF REPORT

## Historic Preservation Commission

September 6, 2023

HPCA-23-00014

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**Agenda Item:** VI.D.2

**Case Number:** HPCA-23-00014

**Property Address:** 110-112 NW 16th Street

**District:** Heritage Hills East Historic District

**Owner:** Stephen Prentice  
314 Frisco RD NW  
Piedmont, OK 73078

### A. CASE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

2. Paint the brick and mortar building (required).

### B. BACKGROUND

#### 1. Project Description

The applicant requests approval to paint the unpainted brick and mortar duplex. This work has been done at 110 and 112 NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street, but shall be reviewed as if it had not.

#### 2. Location

Project site is located on the south side of NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street, between Robinson and Broadway.

#### 3. Site History

*Date of Construction:* 1926

*Zoned Historic Preservation/Historical Landmark:* 1999

*National Register Listing:* 2020

#### *Additional Information:*

The 1922 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps illustrates no building in this location that abuts what was the elective railway right of way to the west and back yards of three (3) dwellings to the east. The 1949 edition illustrates 2-story, brick veneered flats with composition roofing, illustrative of a flat roof, and a fire escape. The 1949 edition also indicates that the three (3) dwellings at the southeast corner at the intersection of Broadway and NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street were replaced with an auto repair shop and filling station. A wide, rectangular "autohouse" is illustrated south of the subject structure, but without property lines, it is unclear if the garage served the flats, one of the dwellings, or the filling station and repair shop. The garage appears as frame construction with a composition (flat) roof and easy access to the driveway south of the auto repair shop. No changes are indicated on subsequent editions of the maps.

#### 4. Existing Conditions

The duplex has been painted but must be reviewed as if it had not.

#### 5. Previous Actions

Previous applications for Historic Preservation Certificate of Appropriateness (HPCA) filed for this property include:

Case Number	Date	Owner	Decision
HPCA-05-144	2005	Struble	Approved
Deck, driveway, fence and gate			
HPCA-23-00014	05/03/2023	Stephen Prentice	Denied with Prejudice
Replace windows.			

#### 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 2, Paint all unpainted masonry at the duplex (required).

- a. Description: The applicant proposes the painting of all masonry at the structure, including all brick, mortar, sills, etc. This was heard at the May 2023 meeting of the HP Commission and continued to the July meeting in order to allow the owner an opportunity to test the least abrasive paint removal process at an inconspicuous location.
- b. References: *Design and Sustainability Standards and Guidelines for Oklahoma City Historic Districts*

##### 3.1 Maintenance, Preservation and Rehabilitation of Exterior Building Materials

**Policy:** Maintain and preserve original or historic exterior finishes and materials such as wood, brick, stone and stucco. When repair or replacement of materials is needed, consideration should be given to sustainable methods and materials that also maintain the historical visual character of a building or property.

**Design Justification:** The form, materials and details of exterior walls, roofs, door and window openings, and decorative details, as well as scale, texture and variety, contribute to a building's historic character. The texture, patterns and finishes of historic materials such as clay tile, slate, brick, stone, stucco and wood

siding are important character-defining features; obscuring or removing these features diminishes the significance of historic buildings and structures.

- 3.1.8: The use of any abrasive, strong chemical, sandblasting or high-pressure cleaning method is not permitted, as these permanently damage the finished material surfaces and accelerate deterioration of historic masonry and wood.
- 3.1.24: Sandblasting, high pressure power washing, the use of blow torch methods and any abrasive cleaning or striping methods must never be used because of the resultant permanent damage.
- 3.1.20: Original or historic masonry or stone surfaces must be maintained and not be painted, unless severe deterioration of the brick or stone can be shown to require painting and other consolidation or stabilization methods cannot be shown to be appropriate.
- 3.1.21: If masonry was previously painted, it is often not appropriate or possible to remove paint, and appropriate repainting must be considered. If color or texture of replacement brick or stone cannot be matched with existing material, as a last resort, painting may be an appropriate treatment.

### 3.2 Paint for Exterior Painted Surfaces

**Policy:** Paint and paint colors are usually not subject to review. Property owners are encouraged to research the specific historic colors of the exterior of the buildings on their property, record their findings for future reference, and select colors that are appropriate to the historic building and district.

**Design Justification:** Property owners are encouraged to select exterior paint colors that best suit the architectural style and historic character of the building.

**Sustainability Justification:** Paint and other building materials such as sealants, caulk and varnishes can emit hazardous gasses known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs). It is recommended that property owners seek out and use low-VOC products.

- 3.2.4: Paint colors should complement each other and respectfully accentuate the building's significant features.
- 3.2.6: Use variations in paint color to reflect variations in material on a building's exterior.
- 3.2.7: Painting of previously unpainted masonry (e.g. brick or stone) is not allowed, as paint eliminates the inherent color variation of masonry that was a conscious part of the original design for the building and also initiates a continuing cycle of paint maintenance. Also, paint may trap moisture that can lead to the deterioration of masonry.
- 3.2.8: When repainting already painted brick or stone, colors may be selected to echo the original colors of the brick or stone. Repainting of previously painted masonry is encouraged, rather than attempts to remove paint, which may cause further damage to the underlying masonry surfaces.

- c. Considerations: Painting the building has been done but must be reviewed as if it had not. The applicant has been directed to test the least abrasive methods of paint removal in an inconspicuous location and report the results to the Commission. Power washing, sandblasting and strong chemicals are generally prohibited due to the extreme damage caused by such methods.

The Standards and Guidelines prohibit the painting of unpainted masonry, including but not limited to brick, mortar, cast stone, stone, concrete, etc. Painting of unpainted masonry that has been exposed to the elements for decades can trap absorbed or condensed moisture, causing irreversible damage to the masonry, including spalling.

Painting historically unpainted surfaces undermines the historic integrity of the structure and disguises intentional color and textural variations chosen for the specific design of the structure that are inherent to the primary masonry unit and the joints. Not only are original color choices eliminated, but the texture of the primary units and joints and historic patterns are disguised. Maintenance of the painted surface further blurs historic patterns and textures.

Painting historically unpainted brick, mortar, or stone initiates a maintenance cycle that undermines the sustainability of the historic fabric. Masonry requires minimal maintenance beyond the mortar joints, while painting must be consistently maintained.

An unintended, but inherent side effect of painting is paint removal. At some point paint removal becomes necessary either due to paint or mortar failure. Trapped moisture or condensing moisture from the interior wall can initiate paint failure. Inappropriate methods of paint removal can cause serious damage to the masonry.

No documentation of paint removal attempts has been submitted to staff. The applicant has provided no further documentation or commentary related to paint removal.

- d. Recommended Specific Findings:

1. That painting of previously unpainted masonry (brick, mortar, stone, cast concrete) is not allowed;
2. That painting unpainted masonry eliminates inherent color, texture, and pattern variations that were a conscious design choice for the historic building;
3. That painting unpainted masonry initiates a continuing cycle of paint maintenance;
4. That painting unpainted masonry may trap moisture that may lead to deterioration of the brick, mortar, or stone;
5. That paint removal must be carefully considered, must be done with the least abrasive method possible, and should be tested in an inconspicuous location;
6. That paint removal may not include power washing, sandblasting, or any other type of blasting.

#### **E. HPCA-23-00014 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **Deny Item 2, Paint all unpainted masonry at the duplex with Prejudice**, with the specific finding that the proposed work will have an adverse effect on the historic character

of the district or property; is not consistent with the provisions of the Standards and Guidelines, and is not in compliance with the relevant sections of the Municipal Code, 2020\*, as referenced in the specific findings in the Staff Report.

**Specific Findings:**

1. That painting of previously unpainted masonry (brick, mortar, stone, cast concrete) is not allowed;
2. That painting unpainted masonry eliminates inherent color, texture, and pattern variations that were a conscious design choice for the historic building;
3. That painting unpainted masonry initiates a continuing cycle of paint maintenance;
4. That painting unpainted masonry may trap moisture that may lead to deterioration of the brick, mortar, or stone;
5. That paint removal must be carefully considered, must be done with the least abrasive method possible, and should be tested in an inconspicuous location; and
6. That paint removal may not include power washing, sandblasting, or any other type of blasting.

*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](http://www.okc.gov/planning/hp/index.html) ; at Planning Department offices located at 420 W. Main, 9<sup>th</sup> floor, and each HP Commission Meeting.*

ADY DC