


Theresa M. White
Charles H. Mullen
601 Miller Avenue
Norman, OK 73069

City of Norman Planning Commission
City of Norman City Council

October 10, 2016

FILED IN THE OFFICE
OF THE CITY CLERK
ON 10/11/16 

Dear Planning Personnel and Norman City Council Members,

Several weeks ago we became aware of a petition to change the zoning of the area surrounding, and including our home of over 20 years. We live in an area that is unique to the City of Norman, with significant historical value, and we therefore support this effort to maintain the integrity of our neighborhood. However, we are concerned that this proposed zoning change would eliminate options, which are critical to our long-term plans to refurbish the apartments adjacent to our home that we purchased several years ago, or build something more compatible with the historic neighborhood. We are therefore asking that our 1950's-era, historically non-contributing apartments be excluded from this proposed zoning downgrade.

We purchased the house at 601 Miller Avenue in January 1994, and have made it our home since that time. We love our 1920's bungalow and the neighborhood in which it sets. We love the location of our neighborhood, near the center core of the original town of Norman and the proximity to the old downtown and to the University of Oklahoma. We especially love the diversity of people in our neighborhood.

In March 2006, we purchased a little apartment complex, comprised of two triplexes and one duplex, and which are located adjacent to our south property line (see attachments). The addresses are as follows: 612 Crawford (triplex), 203 Keith (duplex) and 611 Miller (triplex) and held in the Limited Liability Company, Stewardship Properties, LLC.

We purchased these apartments because we believe that they impacted us significantly, in that we would not wish to spend the amount of money it would take to do a total restoration of our home, unless we controlled this complex and situation. For the record, let me say there were things going on at the apartments that I believe most people would not wish to live near if they could avoid it. The worst incident was when one tenant overdosed on drugs at a party in a different part of town, after which his body was moved across the Oklahoma County line and dumped. Then later that evening, someone came to his apartment, kicked in the front door and also broke out the glass on the driver's side door of his car, which was parked just outside the apartment. The deceased tenant's wife and her grandchild then moved out in a matter of a few short hours.

The time of purchase was not a convenient time financially for us as we were stretching our resources. However, we believed that if we did not purchase the complex at that time, then we would very likely lose the opportunity forever, and thereby lose the opportunity to directly influence the impact these apartments would have on our home. Our rationalization in spending the money to control what went on at the apartments was that we could also turn them into an aesthetically attractive, income producing investment in the future. We could accomplish this either by completely restoring the existing structural units or, perhaps by building a more architecturally compatible structure, or structures, for our designated historic neighborhood. In the meantime, we have concentrated on paying the apartments off and hopefully nearing a time that resources will be freed up to begin restoration of our home and restoration or rebuilding of the apartments.

Currently there is a proposal and petition being presented to the City of Norman Planning Commission in order to attempt to rezone much of our historic neighborhood, along with some areas that are on the perimeter, from R-3 to R-1.

We understand that there is great concern in our neighborhood that outside investors are going to come into the perimeter areas, and maybe even our historic district, and buy properties, demolish them and replace them with the 4-6 bedroom per unit duplexes (8-12 bedrooms per duplex) similar to the structures that have been built over on Jenkins, Boyd and other areas near campus. And 8-12 bedrooms will almost certainly bring 8-12 cars along with them, not to mention those vehicles driven by visitors. To say that we share our neighbors' concern would be an understatement. We strongly believe such structures are inappropriate for our area and would have a significant negative impact on our neighborhood and thereby adversely affect the whole Norman community by diminishing one of its beautiful and early historic neighborhoods.

Our neighborhood has a nice balance of relatively large homes, more modest homes, and much in between. Our neighborhood has some rental properties but is comprised of mostly owner occupied homes. Some of our neighbors have invested great amounts of their time and money into their beautiful old homes. Certainly more homes will be restored in the future and we intend ours to be one of them. We have many different age groups and many different vocations. There is richness in the diversity of our neighborhood in both architecture and more importantly in the people. It is a richness that is difficult, if not impossible to quantify or value in monetary terms, but nevertheless is real.

In the rezoning petition, the proposal is to rezone all homes and multifamily structures to R-1. We have no problem or issue with that designation for all the single-family homes, as we generally support that. We have some mixed feeling about the few multifamily structures. However, for our little apartment complex we feel no ambiguity.

This little apartment complex is truly unique in this neighborhood. It sets on 0.40 acres, which I believe is the largest single plot of land in the proposed rezoning area. They do not look like a house, as do the other multifamily homes in the proposed rezoning area (see attachments). They were built in the mid 1950's as a little apartment complex, they look like apartments, they were sold to us as apartments and were appraised and valued as such, and they remain unmistakably an apartment complex.

Therefore, we respectfully request that this little apartment complex, held in the name of Stewardship Properties, LLC and owned by us be exempted and excluded from the rezoning proposal and remain zoned as R-3.

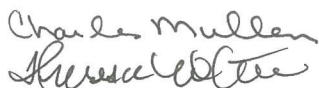
In doing so, it would thereby preserve property value and our ownership rights to either restore and upgrade the interiors or perhaps at some future date build something that would be more architecturally compatible with the neighborhood. These apartments are by far the largest single investment we have ever made. We are not out of town or crosstown wealthy investors coming into the neighbor buying properties to tear down and build high density housing. We have lived in the neighborhood for over 22 years.

After consulting an attorney who specializes in Norman zoning, it is my understanding that, if this complex were downgraded to R-1 and subsequently, we had to obtain a building permit, to say for instance upgrade the wiring and/or plumbing, that this falls into a gray area and that we might only be allowed to do one unit in the complex and one unit only. That possibly leaves us very unsettled.

As to the future possibility of building a different type of multifamily structure, it is my understanding that the footprint of a new structure(s) would have to be less than the footprint of our existing 1950's era complex. More importantly, it is my understanding, after numerous conversations with the city planning people, that it is more difficult to get approval for building something in a historic area than it would be in anyplace else in Norman. Furthermore, that the types of structures that are being built around the campus and to which I referred to earlier in this letter could not be built in a designated historic area and that there are more than ample safeguards to protect the neighborhood from incompatible structures.

Thank you for your consideration on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

The block contains two handwritten signatures. The first signature, "Charles Mullen", is written in a cursive script. The second signature, "Theresa White", is also in cursive and appears to be written below the first signature.

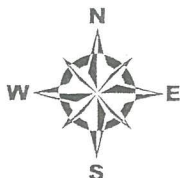
Charles Mullen and Theresa White



Location Map



Map Produced by the City of Norman
Geographic Information System.
The City of Norman assumes no
responsibility for errors or omissions
in the information presented.



September 6, 2016

0 125 250 Ft.



Subject Tract



Zoning



The city of Norman assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions in the information presented.

Scale: 1"=50'





612 Crawford (triplex)



203 Keith (duplex)



611 Miller (triplex)

MULTIFAMILY STRUCTURES IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD



603 Crawford (open?)



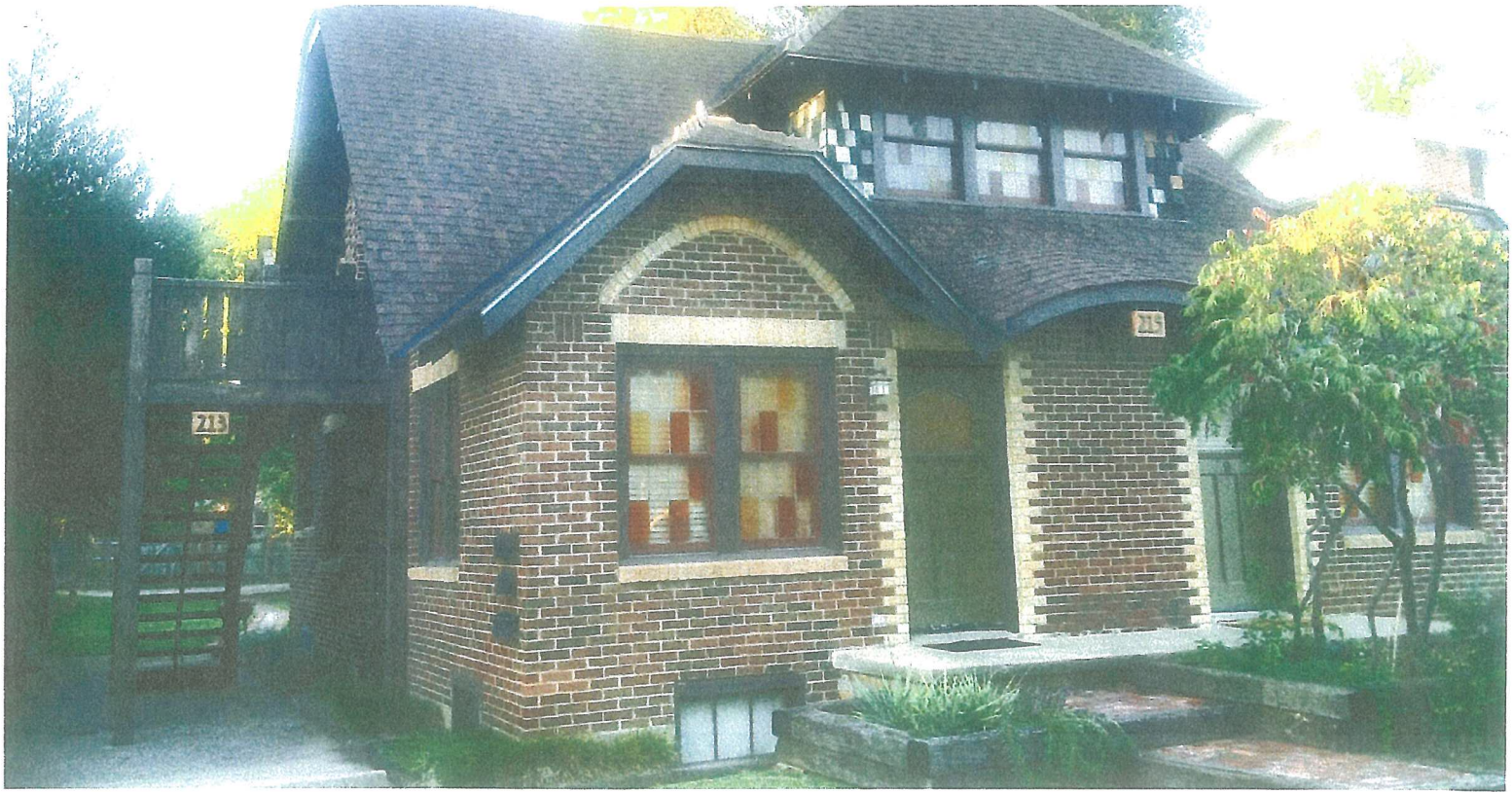
609 Crawford (Duplex?)



313-315 DUFFY (Duplex)



321-323 Keith (Duplex)



213-215 Duffy (triplex)