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ORDINANCE NO. O-1819-1

ITEM NO. 4

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**STAFF REPORT**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

APPLICANT	College Avenue Historic Neighborhood (Scott Moses & Loretta Bass, Reps.)
REQUESTED ACTION	Expansion of the Chautauqua Historic District Overlay
EXISTING ZONING	R-1, Single Family Dwelling District
SURROUNDING ZONING	North: R-1, Single Family East: R-1, Single Family South: R-3, Multi-Family and RM-6, Med. Density Apartment West: R-1, Single Family
LOCATION	East and West sides of College Avenue, generally between Symmes Street on the north and Boyd Street on the south (See Map "A")
SIZE	7.56 acres more or less
PURPOSE	Historic preservation of the 400 block of College Avenue by expansion of the Chautauqua Historic District
EXISTING LAND USE	Single Family Residential
SURROUNDING LAND USE	North: Single Family Dwellings East: Single Family Dwellings South: Restaurant/Barr & Parking lot for OU Hilell West: Single Family Dwellings
LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATION	Low Density Residential

## **A. BACKGROUND:**

Recently, residents in the 400 block of College Avenue living adjacent to the current Chautauqua Historic District have become concerned about the preservation of their historic neighborhood and are now interested in becoming part of the Chautauqua Historic District.

Beginning in the Spring of this year, neighborhood leaders began seeking the support for historic district designation of property owners in the proposed request area. In June, the neighborhood leaders had obtained the required signatures needed to make a request for historic district designation as laid out in Section 429.3.6 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance requires the following:

- an architectural/historic survey of the proposed district done by a qualified professional,
- the gathering of signatures of the property owners owning at least 51% of the land area within the proposed district requesting the historic district designation,
- submission of a zoning application in the same manner prescribed for the designation of other zoning districts.

The Historic District Ordinance calls for expansions of Historic Districts to meet additional criteria:

- the parcels are contiguous with an existing district.
- the parcels include at least one whole block, both sides of the street.

The Ordinance further states that "After these criteria are met, the procedure for expanding a district is the same as the designation of a new Historic District".

As noted above, a historic survey is required of the proposed area. The City has conducted two historic surveys of the proposed area. In 1988-89, the City undertook a Historic Reconnaissance Survey of a majority of the Pre-World War II historic neighborhoods in core Norman. As part of this Reconnaissance Survey, consultants conducted a Historic Survey of an area identified as the Chautauqua Historic Neighborhood District. In 1995, neighbors in a portion of this area sought Historic Designation and in October of that year, the City Council adopted an ordinance that established the Chautauqua Historic District as shown on Map "B".

In 2004, the City contracted with a historic consultant to conduct a Historic District Nomination Survey of the Chautauqua neighborhood area. The Chautauqua Historic District Nomination Survey was completed in May 2004 and found that the neighborhood warranted historic recognition. A nomination to the National Register of Historic Places was prepared by the consultant but was never forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register for consideration.

Utilizing the 2004 Chautauqua Historic District Nomination Survey Report and building permit data, staff determined that 78% of the proposed expansion area still has its historic integrity and these structures would be considered contributing structures to a historic district.

The proposed expansion of the Chautauqua Historic District is a residential neighborhood located along College Avenue between Boyd Street on the south and Symmes Street on the north for a total of 43 parcels. The Zoning Ordinance requires the owners of at least 51% of the land area present a petition in support of the proposal in order to request Historic District Overlay designation. The submitted application for the proposed expanded area of Chautauqua Historic District has owners representing 59.7% of the land area in support of the Historic District Designation as shown on Map "A". Twenty-six of the forty-three proposed parcels signed in support while seventeen parcels did not sign the petition.

With the steps required by the Zoning Ordinance finished, the application for College Avenue to be designated as Historic District Overlay and become part of the Chautauqua Historic District, is complete and able to be reviewed at public hearings before the Historic District Commission and the Planning Commission for recommendation to the City Council. The Historic District Commission at their July 2, 2018 voted unanimously in support of the expanded Chautauqua Historic District by designating the 400 block of College Avenue as an Historic District Overlay.

### **Description of Neighborhood and Architecture**

The 400 block of College Avenue request area, like the rest of Chautauqua Historic District, is a residential area located close to the University of Oklahoma Campus and approximately a mile southwest of Downtown. The 400 block of College Avenue was platted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by local developers interested in meeting the housing needs of the University of Oklahoma staff, professors and students.

The 2004 Chautauqua Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey describes the neighborhood as follows (excerpt):

*"The Chautauqua Historic District, located in Norman, Cleveland County, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural significance as an excellent collection of popular architectural styles and housing types in Norman during the period 1903-1940. The Bungalow/Craftsman style dominates within the neighborhood, with other period styles being well represented, including the Prairie School, Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles. While the district predominately consists of typical, middle class, single family dwellings, it also has a number of multiple family dwellings. These are not restricted to the duplexes and small apartments frequently found in residential neighborhoods. The Chautauqua Historic District has several large, architecturally noteworthy houses. Most of these have served as a fraternity or sorority house at various times."*

### **Period of Significance:**

The 2004 Chautauqua Historic District Nomination Survey determined the period of significance to be 1903 to 1940, based upon the beginning and the conclusion of significant construction activity in the neighborhood.

### **Historic Contribution Rate**

Like all historic intensive surveys, the 2004 Chautauqua Historic District Nomination Survey was conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation of Historic Resources. As such, the Survey requires that the professional conducting the survey identify each structure as either a contributing structure or a non-contributing structure. A contributing structure must be both constructed during the period of significance and retain sufficient historic integrity to reflect the period of significance. The professional who performed the 2004 Chautauqua Historic District Nomination Survey determined that, at the time of the survey, the Chautauqua Survey area, which was roughly comprised of an area from Flood Avenue to Park Drive between Symmes and Lindsey, had an overall historic structure contribution rate of 71%. Utilizing the 2004 Nomination Survey and building permit data, staff has calculated that 78% of the proposed land area in the 400 block of College Avenue contains historically contributing structures. The existing Chautauqua Historic District has approximately 269 contributing structures and 25 non-contributing structures. The proposed College Avenue expansion area would add approximately 54 contributing structures and 15 non-contributing structures to the Chautauqua Historic District.

## Historic Significance of the Chautauqua Neighborhood

The 2004 Chautauqua Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey describes the historic/cultural significance as follows (excerpt):

*“Overall, the Chautauqua Historic District is architecturally significant within Norman as an excellent collection of period housing. The variety of architectural styles found in the neighborhood are reflective of popular tastes during the period. Containing single family homes, duplexes, rooming houses, small apartments, fraternity and sorority houses, an off-campus residence hall and a multi-story apartment building, the district is representative of the variety of housing types constructed in Norman in the first four decades of the twentieth century.”*

The Chautauqua Historic District Neighborhood contributed to the development of Norman and played a crucial role in supplying housing needs for University professors, staff and students through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many community leaders, university professors, staff and students have resided in the Chautauqua Neighborhood over the decades. Today the Chautauqua Historic neighborhood, due to its proximity to both Downtown Norman and the University of Oklahoma and the charming historic character of the neighborhood, is still a much sought after neighborhood in Norman.

### **B. Historic Designation Criteria**

The Zoning Ordinance in Section 429.3.6 (k) lays out a set of criteria to be utilized to determine the eligibility of a proposed historic district. This section requires that the proposed historic district contain at least one of the attributes from the three categories listed in the section. The 2004 Chautauqua Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey and staff analysis indicates that the proposed expanded request area to the Chautauqua Historic District in the 400 Block of College meets the following criteria:

#### ***Zoning Ordinance Section 429.3.6(k) Criteria for Historic District Designation:***

##### ***1. Historical, Cultural Category:***

*[a] Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the locality, state, or nation; or is associated with the life of a personality significant to the past;*

**Staff Comment:** As noted above, the 2004 Chautauqua Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey found that Chautauqua Historic District neighborhood contributed to the development of Norman by providing much needed housing for faculty, staff and students for a growing University of Oklahoma during the first four decades of the twentieth century. The proposed expanded request area of the Chautauqua neighborhood contains structures that have significant character, interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of Norman.

*[c] Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the community;*

**Staff Comment:** The 2004 Chautauqua Historic District Nomination Survey, as stated earlier under Historic Significance section, outlined the role that the neighborhood played in providing housing as the University of Oklahoma grew during the 1920's, 30's, and 40's. The 400 block of College Avenue, like the remainder of the Chautauqua Historic District, contains a variety of historic house

styles and types. In addition to the variety of housing styles, the 400 block exhibits the diversity of housing types that developed during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Norman. While a majority of houses in the 400 block of College Avenue are single family residences, there are two examples of historic duplexes as well as examples of detached garage apartments, reflecting the diversity of housing types described in the 2004 Nomination Survey.

The 400 block of College Avenue exemplifies the diversity of housing styles and types as seen in the rest of Chautauqua Historic District and the role that it played in the development of Norman as a university town.

## **2. Architectural, Engineering Category:**

*[a] Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style;*

**Staff Comment:** The 2004 Chautauqua Nomination Survey found that the Chautauqua Addition was architecturally significant as good representation of popular architectural styles during the first four decades of the twentieth century as stated below:

*"The district is a pleasant mix of popular architectural styles, including Bungalow/Craftsman, Prairie School, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival and a scattering of other period styles. Directly related to its proximity to the University of Oklahoma, the Chautauqua Historic District contains a mix of single family dwellings and multiple family dwellings, including duplexes, rooming houses, apartments and fraternity and sorority houses."*

*The 2004 Chautauqua Neighborhood Nomination Survey goes on to state:*

*"Overall, the variety of styles found in the Chautauqua Historic District are compatible in terms of size, building materials, feeling and association. The majority of styles reflect national architectural trends of the period. Providing further variety to the district is that even the houses classified as the same style are not identical. Thus, the Chautauqua Historic District is an unreplicable expression of period architecture in Norman."*

In addition to several wonderful Craftsman Bungalows, the 400 block of College Avenue also has good examples of other historic architectural styles of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Norman, such as Prairie School style seen at 402 and 444 College Avenue, and Colonial Revival style located at 406-408 and 478 College Avenue. The historic resource sheet from the 1988 Historic Intensive Level Survey also indicates that the structure located at 476 College Avenue is a "fine example of Tudor Revival" and that it is one of the first Tudor Revival style structures built in Norman.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff analysis of the historic district designation criteria indicates that the requested expansion area of the 400 block of College Avenue to the Chautauqua Historic District is an appropriate historic district boundary. The Historic District Commission at their July 2, 2018 heard this request and recommended unanimously the approval of the ordinance to expand the Chautauqua Historic District by designating the 400 block of College Avenue as an Historic District Overlay with determination that it meets at least one of the criteria required in the Zoning Ordinance Section 429.3.6(k) Criteria for Historic District Designation.