
ORDINANCE NO. O-1718-48

ITEM NO. 5

STAFF REPORT

GENERAL INFORMATION

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| APPLICANT | Paul I. Johnston, Southridge Neighborhood Representative |
| REQUESTED ACTION | Historic District Overlay (HD) |
| EXISTING ZONING | R-1, Single Family Dwelling District |
| SURROUNDING ZONING | North: C-1, Local Commercial District RM-2, Low Density Apartment District East: R-1, Single Family Dwelling District South: R-1, Single Family Dwelling District West: PUD, Planned Unit Development R-3, Multi-Family Dwelling District RM-6, Medium Density Apartment District |
| LOCATION | One mile south of downtown Norman and one quarter mile east of OU campus along Classen Boulevard. See attached Map "A". |
| SIZE | 4.31 acres more or less |
| PURPOSE | Single Family |
| EXISTING LAND USE | Single Family |
| SURROUNDING LAND USE | North: Restaurant & Bar with associated parking lot East: Single Family Dwellings South: Single Family Dwellings West: Rail Road Tracks, Apartment Complex |
| LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATION | Low Density Residential |

A. Background:

In September of 2014, the city contracted with a historic consultant to perform a Historic Intensive Level Survey of Southridge neighborhood as seen on attached Map "B". This survey was funded through the State Historic Preservation Office Certified Local Government Grant Program which provides grant money for local historic preservation efforts. The Southridge Neighborhood Historic Intensive Level Survey was completed in May, 2015 and found that a portion of the neighborhood warranted historic designation.

In October of 2016 the neighbors successfully obtained the establishment of the Southridge Historic District as shown on the attached Map "C". The existing Southridge Historic District contains 103 parcels located between Classen Boulevard and Oklahoma Avenue along the streets of Macy, Boyd, Tulsa, Okmulgee and Shawnee. Neighbors located on the west side of Classen Boulevard between Tulsa Street and Brooks Street are now interested in joining the Southridge Historic District. Neighborhood leaders in the fall of 2017 began the process to obtain local historic district designation for the expansion area by seeking the support of property owners of the relevant properties. In March of 2018, 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 neighbors within the proposed expanded area of the Southridge Neighborhood have pursued the steps required by the zoning ordinance to make a request for Historic District designation. The Zoning Ordinance requires the following steps:

- 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.

Additionally, the Historic District Ordinance requires an expansion request to an existing historic district meet the following criteria:

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

The Historic District Ordinance goes on to state that after meeting this criteria the process is the same as the designation of a new Historic District.

With the required steps finished, the application for Southridge Historic District Overlay Designation 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 proposed expansion of the Southridge Historic District are residential lots generally located between Tulsa Street and Brooks Street along the west side of Classen Boulevard and including Earl Sneed Park on the east side of Classen for a total of 18 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 Southridge Historic District has owners representing 59.6% of the land area in support of the Historic District Designation as shown on Map "A". Ten of the 18 proposed parcels signed in support while 8 parcels did not sign the petition. Eight parcels or 41.5% of the 18 parcels of the proposed expansion area contain historically contributing structures as shown on Map "A". However, it should be noted that with the addition of these 18 parcels to the existing Southridge Historic District the percentage of contributing parcels for the entire district would be approximately 59%. The existing Southridge Historic District currently has 62% of their properties are contributing. Therefore, the expansion request for the District by the proposed 18 parcels will not significantly lower the overall contribution rate of the Southridge Historic District.

Description of Neighborhood and Architecture

The proposed expansion area to the Southridge Historic District is comprised of 17 residential lots from the Southridge Addition and the city park lot, Earl Sneed Park. The requested area of expansion is comprised of the residential lots from just south of the Mont Restaurant property to Brooks Street. These lots are bordered by the rail road tracks on the west side and Classen Boulevard on the east side. Earl Sneed Park is located on the east side of Classen at the corner of Okmulgee and Classen. The proposed area of expansion is contiguous to the current Southridge Historic District.

The neighborhood is requesting to add Earl Sneed Park, since the park is part of their neighborhood both physically and functionally. If Earl Sneed Park was to be left out of the request for designation and the expansion area was successful in obtaining designation, there would be a "hole" in the Historic District. The inclusion of Earl Sneed Park as part of this expansion request makes for a cohesive Historic District.

The expanded Southridge Neighborhood request area just like the rest of Southridge is a residential area conveniently located to both downtown Norman and the University of Oklahoma Campus. The Southridge Addition was platted in 1922 by local real estate developers interested in meeting the housing demand from University of Oklahoma staff, professors and students. The construction of this section of Southridge spans four decades and is the only neighborhood in Norman to consistently see construction during the 1930's. While construction in the rest of the residential neighborhoods in Norman lagged or stopped during the Depression, Southridge saw a steady stream of houses built. This residential area fulfilled some of the much needed housing demand created by the opening of the U.S. Naval training facilities in Norman which flooded the town with many military personnel as well as their families. Examples of contributing properties that helped fulfil the housing for the military influx around the WW II era can be seen at 1316 Classen, 1318 Classen and 1384 Classen.

The 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey describes the neighborhood as follows (excerpt):

"The dominant architectural style in the Southridge Addition Historic District is the Tudor Revival with twenty-two examples. Typically constructed of brick with typically dominant chimneys on the façade, the Tudor Revival style was popular in residential neighborhoods across Oklahoma in the 1920s and 1930s. The next most prevalent style in the Southridge Addition Historic District is the Colonial

Revival style with fifteen buildings classified as such. Also a popular architectural style in mid-twentieth century neighborhoods, the Colonial Revival style is frequently constructed of brick or a combination of wood siding on the second level and brick on the lower. With just one fewer examples, the Modern Movement's Minimal Traditional style was also a prevalent style in the Southridge Addition Historic District. This style of home, frequently having wood or replacement siding, was especially popular after World War II. In order of descending popularity, the remaining architectural styles represented in the Southridge Addition Historic District consist of the Modern Movement's Ranch subtype with seven examples; the Contemporary style with six examples; the Bungalow/Craftsman with three examples; the No Distinctive Style with two examples; the Classical Revival with one example; and, the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style with one example."

Date of Construction: The construction of the Southridge Neighborhood began in 1922 and continued through the 1950s. The requested expansion area for the Historic District exhibits housing primarily from the 1920's through the 1940's.

Period of Significance:

The 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey determined the period of significance for the Southridge Neighborhood to be 1922 to 1959, based upon the beginning and the conclusion of significant construction activity in the neighborhood. The proposed expansion area request would fall within this period of significance as well.

Historic Contribution Rate

Like all architectural/historic intensive level surveys, the 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive 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 the professional conducting the survey to 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 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey determined an overall contribution rate for the Southridge survey area to be 56%. Of the 103 parcels in the existing Southridge Historic District, the survey indicates that 61 of the parcels contain contributing structures. This gives the current Southridge Historic District a 62% contribution rate.

As mentioned earlier, for the expanded request area, the contribution rate is only 41.5%. However, when the proposed parcels are added to the existing Southridge Historic District, the contribution rate is 59% which is a loss of only 3 percentage points. It should be noted also that the Earl Sneed is not a considered a contributing parcel since it does not contain any structures but was included in percent calculations. If approved, the Southridge Historic District would have 121 parcels of which 69 would be contributing.

B. Historic Designation Criteria

The Zoning Ordinance in Section 429.3.6 (k), lays out a set of criteria to be utilized by the Historic District Commission 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 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey and staff analysis indicates that the proposed Southridge Historic District with the addition of the expanded area of request still 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 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey found that Southridge “contributed to the development of Norman as a University city” by providing much needed housing over the course of three decades from 1922 till 1950. In particular, Southridge saw continuing construction of houses during the Depression Years when most additions slowed or stopped construction in Norman. Depression Era houses in the proposed expansion area include 1310 Classen, 1352 Classen, 1386 Classen and 1602 Classen. The expansion request area to Southridge 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 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey outlines the continuous role that this area of the Southridge neighborhood played in providing housing as the city grew during the 1920’s, 30’s, and 40’s as stated below:

“During the neighborhood’s first decade, only about twenty-seven houses were constructed. The greatest decade of growth for the Southridge neighborhood occurred in the between 1931 and 1940 with the construction of approximately sixty-seven buildings. During the war years of the 1940s, just four single family residences were built in the Southridge neighborhood. An additional four building apartment complex was built in the neighborhood in 1943-1944. Following the end of World War II, about thirty-five homes went up in the neighborhood by 1950, at which time development in significant numbers ceased with just nineteen buildings erected between 1951 and 2007.”

2. Architectural, Engineering Category:

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

Staff Comment: The 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey found that the Southridge Addition was architecturally significant as “good representation of popular architectural styles during the middle decades of the twentieth century.” The prominent architectural styles of

Southridge includes: Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Classical Revival and Modern Movement's Minimal Traditional. Excellent examples of these styles can still be seen today in the following identified contributing structures: 1310 S Classen, 1320 S Classen, and 1602 Classen.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff analysis of the historic district designation criteria indicates that the requested expansion area to the Southridge Historic District is an appropriate historic district boundary. The Historic District Commission will hear this request at public hearing on May 7, 2018. The Historic District recommendation regarding this request to expand the Southridge Historic District designation will be provided the night of the Planning Commission meeting.