

SOUTHRIDGE HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD

511 Shawnee St.
Norman, OK 73071
April 10, 2018

Mr. David John, Chair & Historic District Commission
City of Norman
201 W. Gray St.
Norman, OK 73069

Dear Mr. John,

With this letter I am requesting the Historic District Commission consider the designation of a portion of the Southridge Neighborhood as historic district (please see attached map).

The proposed addition to the Southridge Historic District are the 17 residences on the west side of Classen Boulevard between E. Boyd St. and E. Brooks Street. We also are asking that the historic district overlay be placed over Earl Sneed Park, 1381 Classen Boulevard. At the present time Earl Sneed Park is bordered on three sides by the Southridge Historic District; with this request, if it is granted, the park would be bordered on all four sides by the HD but not be in it. We believe that Earl Sneed Park should be designated as part of the Southridge Historic District.

The chief reason for our making this request is to preserve what remains of the architectural integrity of the homes on the west side of Classen Boulevard. There are several houses in this four-block area that are contributing structures which have a charm as well as a historic integrity all their own, including the following:

1310 Classen Boulevard is the stately two-story brick home closest to the Mont commercial properties on the north end of Classen. It was constructed in the late 1920s and is arguably the most substantial residence on the west side. It is built in the craftsman style and its signature feature is its porte cochere on the south side of the house. The porte cochere is topped by a sleeping porch, arguably the most visible and probably also the best-preserved example of this residential style in all of Norman. Before the days of central heat and air, the finest homes had porte cocheres and sleeping porches with large windows to facilitate sleeping during the hot summer months.

1320 Classen Boulevard was built about 1923, the same time as the Southridge Addition was originally platted. This two-story red brick home is an example of the Prairie School architectural style, and has the unusual feature of its brick chimney on the south elevation which pierces the broad boxed eaves.

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1386 Classen Boulevard dates from approximately 1939 and is an outstanding example of a prewar minimal traditional residence. It is one of the finest examples of minimal traditional architecture in the Southridge neighborhood.

1602 Classen Boulevard was built ca. 1934 and is an excellent example of the bungalow/craftsman style. Its detached garage and larger-than-average lot size make this home appear as a transitional design between city and country living at the south end of the Southridge Addition, where in the 1920s and '30s the city ended along then-U. S. Highway 77 (Classen Boulevard) and the more rural parts of Norman and Cleveland County began.

It is hard to believe that when the Southridge Addition was platted in 1922, Norman had fewer than 6,000 residents. Norman's population according to the latest figure available, 2016, is 122,180. These homes we are asking to be included in the historic district overlay are some of the oldest homes remaining in Norman, they are part of the original Southridge Addition, and together with the Southridge Addition homes on the east side of Classen, they form a single unit which is historically undeniable and contemporaneous with the homes already part of the Southridge Historic District.

There is also the aesthetic dimension of these four blocks of single-family residences which we have considered in making this request. As one drives south on Classen south of E. Boyd St., the beautiful canopy of mature trees lining both sides of Classen and arching out over the roadway is one of the joys of living in our city which our residents get to enjoy and experience every time they drive this route. Our request seeks to preserve and even to enhance this aesthetic experience of our citizens by preserving the nearly century-old homes and the plantings on both the east and the west side of Classen Boulevard as residents drive through the main traffic artery which serves the Southridge neighborhood.

When we came before you in 2016 asking for historic district overlay for Southridge, we asked you for your consent and permission to impose the historic district overlay on 103 structures. This time, we are asking you for historic district overlay on only 17 additional residences as well as on Earl Sneed Park so they may be added into the Southridge Historic District.

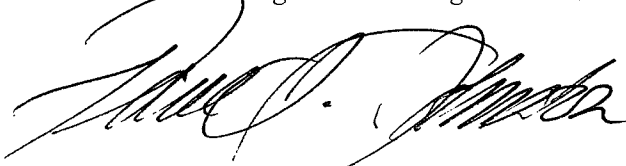
It is our hope that the Historic District Commission will find these additional properties which we are proposing worthy of historic district designation and recommend the designation to the Planning Commission and City Council. With this designation also these residents of Southridge who live on the

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west side of Classen Boulevard would be allowed to protect as well as enhance the historic character of their neighborhood that they cherish for now and into the future.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

For the Southridge Historic Neighborhood,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul I. Johnston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "J".

Paul I. Johnston, Ph.D.
511 Shawnee St.
paratus30@att.net