



The City of NORMAN

201 West Gray • P.O. Box 370
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HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
(405) 366-5332

May 7, 2014

Hollie Hunt, Intern Architect
on behalf of Kash and Nina Barker
Krittenbrink Architecture
301 W Boyd Street, Suite 200
Norman, Oklahoma 73069

RE: HDC partial denial of COA application at 434 Chautauqua

Dear Hollie:

Allow me to restate the Historic District Commission's decision on May 5 regarding your clients' Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify the structure at 434 Chautauqua. Your clients' request was to make the following alterations to this structure:

- Remove dormer peaks on front elevation
- Continue existing mansard roof with wood shingle siding on second floor in a single plane the full width of the house
- Remove front porch screens, screen door and partial porch walls and replacing with railing and baluster system and piers with tapered cedar columns

The Commission split your clients' request into two parts: 1) proposed modifications to the existing front porch and 2) proposed modifications to the second story on the front elevation.

Commission Decision

On the request to modify the front porch as presented in the application drawings, the Commission voted unanimously to table a decision pending additional information. On the request to modify the second story front elevation as presented in the drawings the Commission voted unanimously to deny the request.

Discussion

Your clients' request was based on an assertion that the proposed modifications would return the house to an earlier form. The Commission denied the request, stating that based on the evidence presented, they did not see proof that the modifications proposed were returning the house to an earlier form. In the case of proposed porch modifications, the Commission asked for more information supporting the notion that the porch previously had a different form.

After a lengthy discussion, Commissioners acknowledged that it was possible that 434 Chautauqua had been modified over time, which is common for houses of this age. But Commissioners also stated that the elements proposed for modification—the front porch and the mansard roof on the front elevation—were character defining features of this structure. They said that even if these features had been added later, the changes had occurred many decades ago and had acquired their own historic significance over time. Removal of these elements would completely alter the structure’s historic integrity as it is viewed from the street.

Commissioners said that they were not persuaded that there was conclusive evidence of an earlier roof form. They added that the structure had been the subject of two historic/architectural surveys conducted in 1988 and 2004 both of which designated it as a contributing structure to the Chautauqua Historic District in its current form. Lastly, several commissioners referenced the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, which is Section 1.4 of Norman’s *Historic Preservation Guidelines*, which addresses changes to historic buildings over time.

Section 1.4 Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

4. Acknowledge Changes Over Time. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

Ordinary Maintenance and Repair

Another issue raised during discussion was the deteriorated condition of the structure due to poor construction methods and design. Commissioners agreed that areas of deterioration can and should be repaired. That activity is described in the Preservation Guidelines as “ordinary maintenance and repair” and is strongly encouraged. Staff commented during discussion that undertaking ordinary maintenance of historic structures often provides opportunities for property owners to correct minor design flaws that have caused deterioration due to water, insect and wildlife damage. These issues can usually be addressed without removing character defining features of the historic structure.

Appeals Process

In light of the Commission’s partial denial of your clients’ application for Certificate of Appropriateness on May 5, they have the right to appeal the Commission’s decision to City Council. The procedure to file an appeal is described below:

As stated on page 5 of the *Historic Preservation Handbook*:

"If the Historic District Commission denies a Certificate of Appropriateness, no permit shall be issued and the applicant shall not proceed with the proposed work. The commission must place in its record the reasons for the denial and will notify the applicant of such determination. A copy of the reasons and recommendations, if any, will also be included in the record and forwarded to the applicant. Owners, agents and residents may appeal within 10 days from the decision of the commission by filing a "Notice of Appeal" the Office of the City Clerk of Norman", 201 W Gray Street, Norman, OK 73069 or by emailing your intent to appeal to City Clerk Brenda Hall at brenda.hall@normanok.gov In this case the deadline to file an appeal to City Council is May 15, 2014.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed and as always, staff is available to discuss this situation with you and your clients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Atkinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Susan Owen Atkinson, AICP
Historic Preservation Officer