

**Norman Historic District Commission Meeting  
Verbatim Minutes of May 7, 2018 for Item No. 7:  
Continuation of Certificate of Appropriateness for 504 S Lahoma.**

HDC Commission Members:	City of Norman Staff:
<b>Cameron Brewer Anna Eddings Erin Gavaghan David John - Chair Russ Kaplan Glen Roberson</b>	<b>Susan Connors – Planning &amp; Community Development Director Anais Starr – Preservation Officer Jolana McCart – Admin Tech IV Jeanne Snider – Assistant City Attorney I Applicant Curtis McCarty</b>
<b>Jim Gasaway, Greg Heiser and Emily Wilkins were absent.</b>	

**(HDC Case 17-25a) Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a garage door and garage door trim for property located at 540 S Lahoma.**

**Chair John:** I believe staff has a presentation.

**Anais Starr:** So if you remember this garage structure for this property - right now there is just a carport existing there that you can see in this photo. The garage structure was approved at the March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting but the Commission requested that the applicant come back with a garage door either with some alternative material in wood or in Smartwood. He had originally presented a steel overhead garage door and you requested that he come back with something different. So tonight he has come back with his request. Let me show you some more photos of the property and then here is his proposed door. It would be a steel door with composite overlay. In my staff report I think that I pointed out that in recent times the Commission has not approved steel doors that face the front right-of-way. We haven't had a request to do Smartwood or composite wood so this would be something that the Commission would need to consider and decide if it is appropriate in this situation. And again this is a new garage. It is not trying to mimic the existing original historic garage which we do not know what it looked like. It was removed some years back. Some decades ago. So again, I think that it is up to the Commission to decide if this is an appropriate use in this situation. If a composite would be appropriate.

With that, if the Commission has any questions I would be happy to answer those.

In the PowerPoint I included some of the drawings and just so you can get oriented again this is where the new garage is proposed. This is the design of the new garage and again, these are the doors that he originally proposed and now he has come back with this new one. And then I also included a picture – there was some discussion about this Smartwood door. I think that this is located someplace, Chautauqua/Lahoma, not in the District but right outside the District. And then the last wood overhead garage door that the Commission approved that's been installed is this one at 648 S Lahoma. It is wood.

My understanding is that the recessed panels are wood composite. But it is a wood, solid wood door.

So if you have any other questions I would be happy to answer that and the applicant is here this evening and he does have a PowerPoint presentation to give as well.

**Chair John:** any questions?

**R Kaplan:** do you happen to know when we approved 648 S Lahoma?

**A Starr:** 3 years ago almost. Right when I started working here, 2014. What had been done there had deteriorated so they made a request to come in and replace that.

**Chair John:** any other questions? The applicant has a presentation at this time?

**Curtis McCarty – owner of 540 S Lahoma**

I appreciate you all taking the opportunity tonight to hear my garage door presentation. If you recall in March there was discussion about garage door types and doing a little bit more investigation to come back to you all with something I thought – and maybe you all will agree – would be something appropriate for a new garage in this area. I know that this isn't the norm, and so when I originally did my application driving through the area I was simply looking around at what other people had done and trying to meet those requirements. There is one other house that is similar in architectural style on Chautauqua that you will see in this presentation as well.

So I am going to go through the slide presentation. I went down the block of Lahoma and Chautauqua within the one square block area - two streets - north of Boyd down both directions. So as I went, I was just taking pictures – this is my neighbor's house to the south of me. As you can see it has a steel raised panel door. This is another house on Lahoma as well that has some type of wood/Masonite door. Now one thing that I am going to point out is that some of the doors that we have seen in the previous action Item 6 on the Agenda do not open up but swing out. My whole idea of a garage is that I can push a button and pull in without having to get out and open my doors as they do not make an opener that swings garage door out in a barn door style. So I am looking for something that would work that actually physically raises in the sense of a garage door. And I do have a cut-a-way sample. I would be more than happy to show you what I brought tonight of the garage door that I am presenting which is a steel door with a Smarttrim overlay. This is exactly what I am proposing. *(Stepped away from the mike and cannot hear what is being said.)*

Here's another garage in the area. This is working down Lahoma still *(couldn't understand.)* Here's another similar in the area again that swings out, does not raise up. Here's a steel raised panel door – 16 panel – just regular steel door. Here is another steel door that they did put some window lights in. Another steel raised panel door still on Lahoma. These are all in the Historic District. Another steel raised panel door. Here is a

wood Masonite door – 16 panel. Another steel raised panel door. Another steel raised panel door. Steel flushed panel door. Wood door – barn style trim. I’m not sure from the street – I couldn’t tell if it was wood or not but by looking at the panels it appears to be Masonite or some type or wood. This is going down Chautauqua now. You can see steel panel doors. Steel panel doors. Wood Masonite with some lights in the top of them. Steel raised panel door. Wood door. Masonite wood of some type. Wood door. Steel raised panel door. And this is the house that is the closest architectural style to my house. This is the one that I had actually looked at prior to deciding what kind of door I thought would be right for this period of home. And it has a steel raised panel door. Close up picture – steel raised panel door. Wood door barn style that swings out. Here is another barn style. This door is actually, from what I can tell, is the exact same manufacturer as I am proposing tonight. Steel raised panel door. Masonite wood door. And then here is what I am proposing.

So what I did is went back through lots of pictures of this time period of homes to see what architectural style I thought would fit the home the best. Further investigation of how I could make a barn door style actually raise to the best of my ability. I reached out to garage door manufacturer in Ponca City and they sent me cut sheets and details of one that I had sent them which basically looks like this.

And so what I was proposing tonight and the reason for my presentation that I had taken pictures of was just to kind of seek to understand a little more of what is going on in the Historic District and I didn’t count them but close to 50% are probably in violation of the Commission by having steel raised panel doors. How they were installed I’m not really sure but I am here before you to ask for steel door with a wood composite overlay. That is the style that you see in front of you and on the screen. This door can be built with the panels that raise up and that the closest thing that I could find to the style that I thought would work. That said I would be happy to answer questions.

**R Kaplan:** the door manufacturer, do they offer other base panels with the flat configuration that you are starting from to create the look made of other materials?

**C McCarty:** they do not. Are you asking if they build wood doors?

**R Kaplan:** that you could mimic the same effect with?

**C McCarty:** I do not know if they build a wood door. I don’t think they do – the one that I am working with.

**R Kaplan:** this particular manufacturer or...

**C McCarty:** this manufacturer that I am working with – I don’t believe they build a solid wood door if that is what you are asking.

**R Kaplan:** ok.

**A Starr:** are you asking if you can get this in wood? Or....

**C McCarty:** that's Smarttrim.

**R Kaplan:** that's Smarttrim – I knew that. I was asking if his door company could provide a similar product that wasn't steel. Effectively is what I was asking.

**C McCarty:** in a wood door? Is that what you are asking? Solid wood?

**R Kaplan:** or whatever products that are available is what I am not sure about. What other options are there.

**C McCarty:** so I went – someone had sent me information about a company called Clopay, sold by Home Depot. I met with them and met with my door company. I called them just to find out what was available. There are wood doors available on the market that can be built or made. The problem I have is the durability. So the long term durability of a wood door is a lot of upkeep and maintenance. And as you can see in many of these pictures, I don't know how old some of these doors are, but they are delaminating and coming apart. And I think for what I am trying to do – what would best suit me – would not having to replace my garage door in 10 years. Or having to repaint it every year to protect it from the elements. So a steel door is obviously tested and would be something that would last a lot longer. Wood doors are heavy and dangerous and frankly not something you see in modern construction that will last.

**Chair John:** any other questions of the applicant?

**C McCarty:** one more thing that is a misnomer about garage doors is that they have to meet the building code which it must be able to take a 90 mile-an-hour wind – Clopay normal doors do not meet that. So if you go to Home Depot and buy this door off the shelf, it doesn't meet the building code today.

**R Kaplan:** that is a wood door you are referring to?

**C McCarty:** any of their doors. So you have to buy their high wind package which they don't stock and they don't keep readily available in this market because they weren't aware of it.

**R Kaplan:** the door that you are proposing does have this rating?

**C McCarty:** yes sir.

**Chair John:** thank you. Lee Hall had a comment.

**Public Comments:**

**Lee Hall – 648 S Lahoma**

Actually it's more of a question – I think you raised an interesting question about the presence of steel doors in this particular area of the Historic District. And it's a question of Anais and/Susan. It's my understanding that most of those steel doors were installed before we had a Historic District overlay and that the history of requesting either replacement doors or in this case a door for new construction, the Commission has not approved a steel door that faces the street. Is that correct? I mean.....

**A Starr:** yes. That is my understanding. My search showed....it is difficult to determine the steel doors that he has in those photos....it is difficult to determine without doing a lot of research how they came to be. But you are allowed to replace like-with-like. So if The Historic District in Chautauqua started in 95...96...97. If it had already been replaced, you could continue replacing it going forward with the same thing.

I think I had this conversation with the applicant and it is possible that people you know had a garage door break and didn't think anything about it and they just replaced it. They called the garage door company...if you called one of the main ones they would probably offer you a steel door and probably wouldn't offer you anything else. That is what they deal in. And so they have just had it replaced. Unless I notice it or the prior historic preservation officer noticed it or a neighbor called in to complain, there's not really a way to know why there are steel doors. It could be a combination of things.

**L Hall:** so the general assumption is that most of those steel doors were probably in place before the District...

**A Starr:** it could entirely be possible they were in place....

**L Hall:** so in that case they would be able to continue to have them....

**A Starr:** once it became a historic district, they would be allowed to replace them with a like door. So if they had a metal garage door and upgraded for whatever reason or replaced it due to hail damage then they could be allowed to do that. So yes.

**L Hall:** since you used our house at 648 S Lahoma as an example, we were instructed at the time – and it's a different situation – and I understand that because it was a replacement, not new construction – but we were told at the time that since our doors faced the street that not only did we need to replace like-with-like as far as style, it was not even possible to consider a steel door for any reason. Good. Bad. Or not. Because it faced the street.

**A Starr:** that is what you were told at the time and I think that's how the Commission felt about it at that time. Since that time I think the Commission has asked for wood most of the time – not most of the time, all of the time – for doors facing the front right-of-way.

**L Hall:** just as a comment, I appreciate the fact the Mr. McCarty has come back with an alternative and tried to come up with what is probably a compromise for him but wood is more in keeping with character of the neighborhood.

**Commission Discussion:**

**G Roberson:** Anais, when the survey was done, when we were investigating whether or not to include this neighborhood under the Ordinance, was there a note as to how many or the percentage of the garage doors were actually wooden and how many were.....

**A Starr:** no, that was not formalized in the report. You know on each individual address there might have been some indication whether the garage was historic or not but that would have been the extent of it. There were photographs taken and you might be able to tell from the photographs as to whether or not it was a metal or not a metal garage door. But again that would require staff, or somebody, to go back and research all of that and look on each address and see in order to come up with a percentage of what is metal and what is not metal. And whether or nor they existed there in 1988 when the first survey was done as opposed to the 2004 survey so it would be quite a bit of work to determine that.

**G Roberson:** thank you.

**Chair John:** any other comments or discussion points?

**C Brewer:** I just want to go back the March meeting and either refresh or inform some of the crowd about some of the discussion that happened in that meeting. First of all we had some – a lot – of discussion of the design of the new garage and it was decided to proceed with the approval of the garage and we went to talking about the garage door. At the time, I believe the proposal was for a steel garage door. There was quite a bit discussion about the type of material that we felt was appropriate and at the time I made a suggestion that I had seen the subject door that Anais used in her presentation that was – I forget the address – on Lahoma that faces an alley way. That uses the same material and is not in the Historic District but the reasoning for that is that I felt the Commission and the applicant should be charged with doing a little more research on this type of material and then deciding if it is appropriate as a new material that would be basically setting a new precedent for a garage door that is facing the street.

After doing some more research myself, I first of all appreciate the research and thought that the applicant put into going down the street, taking photos, and really thinking through how many garage doors have steel and how many others have wood. I think that this is important to consider. At the same time it's been pretty clear as a Commission that we have always said that new garage door, facing the street, would be wood. And after considering it further for the last two months, I feel the same and it's good to know that

there are alternatives that exist that mimic the historic character much better than they used to.

At the same time there is some discussion as to whether there is actually a manufacturer that can make a door that is wood or – in this case – is Masonite with the panels and it's clear that there is a product or multiple products out there whether it is off the shelf or custom made to allow a garage door to be installed that is wood.

So under the Historic Guidelines again citing the same guideline as I did in the previous item, 2.3.5, in this case this is new construction. This guideline says to “make new construction compatible” this is entirely new construction and again it says “*if a new garage is the approved alternative, it shall be compatible in form, scale, size, materials, features and finish with the principal structure. New accessory structures shall maintain the traditional height and proportion of accessory buildings in the district.*”

In looking at the compatibility of the new garage design with the garage door we had the discussion of form, scale, size and then in looking at materials, features and finish, that's looking at the garage door in this case. I feel strongly that we should continue to set a course that we approve wooden garage doors that are facing the street. Anybody that has heard me in past meetings, I have felt the same for alley ways but you know not everyone feels the same way there too. But that's ok. Those are a few of my comments.

**R Kaplan:** I was not present at the March meeting so I wasn't privy to those discussions other than reviewing the minutes. It's hard to get the real feel for what happened from that. Trying to congeal my thoughts into some that is cogent here.

So I think that a stamped metal door or raised panel typically – like many of the photos that we saw from the District – is wholly inappropriate and largely the reason that I think that, is not because I care what it is made of, but because of the way it looks. From the street you can look at it and say “that's a metal door” that came out of the production line in the modern world not in the period of significance of the district.

So the struggle that I have is the notion of approving material that is not what we are looking for but it does provide the appearance of what we are looking for with modern construction. I've researched personally, not in a historic district, really strong doors because I share the concern about wind and I choose not to put a wooden door on my personal home on the west side of Norman because I want the strength and the strongest door I could find was made of metal and had reinforcing bars and was not off the shelf but was custom ordered. But to me durable materials that would withstand storms as well as withstand time and water and everything else is important to maintaining the district while maintaining the appearance of the District.

So I am torn over the notion of trying to approve a steel door but also looking at the door that for all purposes is going to look like a wooden door – does to me once you put paint on that – that would look like a wood door and would fool me from the street and

particularly unlike the Hall's garage, which is 6 feet off the sidewalk, this one is probably 100 plus feet off the sidewalk. So for anyone driving through the neighborhood appreciating our historic district, they would think that it was a wood door too. So that's kind of what I am struggling with.

**C Brewer:** I will make one comment. I thought about the distance from the street 'cause I do agree in this case that the distance from the street may not – this type of design and material may have the appearance of a wood door. The difficulty that I have for future cases, what is that distance that is appropriate? And so if this is just another case of if this is approved then someone can say well mine is 40-feet, it has that same appearance and so just need to think about future cases as well with that consideration.

**R Kaplan:** agreed.

**G Roberson:** Mr. Chair. Just a comment. We are charged with enforcing our City Ordinance under the Guidelines. We are not up here discussing what we like aesthetically or what we like in terms of whether or not it is just pleasing to us. We must base our decision on what our Ordinance says. Given the Guidelines that are given to us that are all established by the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and that charge is what gives us pause always. And under those materials is a significant part of historic features. And I think that's what is giving a lot of us pause here.

The distance from the street may look like a historic feature but in fact it's not a historic feature. So that is what we are grappling with here and frankly, Mr. Chair, I am sympathetic with the idea that we are in a way setting a precedent here and I still think that wood is what is appropriate in this case. Thank you for your time.

**E Gavaghan:** I apologize that I wasn't at the March meeting so I have a question and maybe a comment. Do we have – I don't remember – or what the design of the garage itself looked like? And what material was on the exterior of that?

**A Starr:** I do have the – it is stucco or it is not – this is the architectural drawings for what that was approved. So it would be, you know, similar to the one we saw earlier this evening that the Commission just approved. It's that stucco finish. He is trying to match the house again. There was a historic garage located here in this location that he has picked – similar location that he has picked, but it was removed some decades ago. So we don't know what the design was so at the March 5<sup>th</sup> one you found the stucco design to be appropriate and compatible with the principal structure. It was just the garage door with the 16-panel door – made out of steel – you wanted to see some alternatives. And you discussed several at that meeting. It is very simple, much like the house which is a simple stucco design.

**E Gavaghan:** I feel like we have had a bit of this discussion in the past about appearance and whether it is historic materials or mimics historic materials. I feel that we still in need of discussion about that and that it could potentially come up in the review of the

Guidelines. And I tend to agree with Russ that the appearance is satisfactory in keeping the appearance of the Historic District.

**Chair John:** Much like the use of Smartsiding, which I am opposed to in the historic districts, as a replacement of wood because while it mimics the graining of wood it cannot replace the irregularities that are present in natural wood products. I'm leaning against allowing garage facing the street being something that is not wood.

**A Eddings:** I would look more favorably in this instance on a material that looks like wood but is not wood just because it is on a new structure not replacing a historic door on an original structure. And there is a wood component on the door. It's not that we are approving an all metal door. It's a door that has both metal and wood components. The wood component adds to the design of the door quite a bit.

**Chair John:** do we have a.....do we want to consider a motion at this point?

**C Brewer:** I just have a question on any motion – it's something we ask every few months – but if a motion to accept....

**A Starr:** Motion to approve, yes.

**C Brewer:** Motion to approve. Well first of all. What is a tie?

**A Starr:** It fails. A tie would fail.

**C Brewer:** So I just want to make sure that however it goes the applicant has the opportunity to revise the application with a different door....

**A Starr:** Right. If it fails then he would have to come back for a whole new application or he could appeal to City Council your decision. That would be his two choices.

I would point out that - I think that I put it in my staff report – two things that do make this situation a little different. It does sit – I believe I said – 100 feet back from the front property line. The new structure does. And it is a new structure so I think that Anna's point – you know I think the Commission wouldn't be struggling if this was on a historic building and you wouldn't be having this struggle you would just tell them they needed to have a wood door and that would be it.

I think that it's because of those – he's building a new structure but it is in the traditional historic location and then he is offering a compromise as one of the public said that does have wood components in it so I think – you know I think that this is where the decision is to be made – do you want to make a blanket – you know it always has to be wood not matter what if it is facing the front if it is at the end of the driveway or could there be some flexibility because it is sitting so far back but also because mainly because it's not a historic structure.

I would say that in addition to 648 which was a replacement door you since also approved at 506 S Lahoma a wood door as well. They didn't build that structure but it was all wood garage structure. It was not replacing a historic structure there had been no garage on that property ever. They were just building a new one and it was going to be at the end of the driveway. I think that they proposed it that way but that is how you approved it. So I think that if you have some logic to why you are approving it, you can be consistent going forward that if there is something there to hang your hat on then you would be able to be consistent with that. I don't see it as a problem either way.

**E Gavaghan:** could you repeat that last part? You said that we had approved....

**A Starr:** 506 S Lahoma?

**E Gavaghan:** and it was what kind of door?

**A Starr:** it was wood. It was a whole wood structure. They proposed it that way. Because they were hoping to get it passed. Because they had quite a bit of conflict on that particular address when it came before the Commission so it was proposed that way and got approved that way. And it was a new structure wasn't replacing a historic structure.

I don't know if any of that helps you in making this decision. You are certainly welcome to ask the applicant if he is willing to consider alternatives if you feel that there may be, you know, give him an opportunity to express what he is willing to do so that he can keep his application alive and not have to come back again with a whole new application or appeal to the City Council.

**C Brewer:** I always favor that option so would be happy to ask if the applicant would consider an alternative. Or I will be more specific, a wood door.

**C McCarty:** I appreciate that. I will just be frank, I know you all are in discussion of updating the Guidelines as the Federal government has and I think that you will find in there that there are some changes that you all will ponder upon of what you are discussing tonight. Newer technologies and some of the things that we are up against in the construction world – this is what I do for a living – it's not as simple as replacing it with a wood door. There are a lot of factors that come with that. I could get a cheap Masonite door and put it up there but it is not what I want to do. And to find a true style wood door like I would propose that people would use – they would last – if you are going to make people do wood doors are very difficult to find and even a craftsman to build them. Most of the doors today are not wood. You think they are wood but Masonite is a pressed wood that is a composite as well so any wood door that has Masonite in it is not a wood door by technical terms.

So I know that this is difficult for you all – these are big decisions that come – but there is a lot of new technology in construction that needs to be looked upon for the Historic

District as you all move forward. I would ask you all to take a vote tonight. I've been here – this is my fourth meeting – the first meeting was postponed, or it didn't make – to make a long story short, this is the fourth meeting that I have been through and last month I had to postpone because I had a conflict but I really need to get moving on deciding on if I am going to put garage doors on it or not. And what type.

So I would ask you all – there's no reason for me to postpone any further over the type of door. I have done a lot of research and have spent a lot of time investigating styles, materials and what would be most appropriate to preserve the historic character of the house itself. So that is why I have brought forward to you what I have tonight.

**A Starr:** I would add one other thing that the applicant's comments remind me of. After our last meeting where you requested alternatives, I did check with the homeowner at 648 S Lahoma and that door is – the wood stiles – or the frame – the panel inside is a pressed wood. I don't know if that helps any with your information of what you are contemplating. Or not.

**Chair John:** since this is a new structure, I think that we have a little more of a leeway than if it was a historic garage.

**A Eddings:** I would add that when considering the capability of replacement materials the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, which is included in our Guidelines, say that deteriorated features can be replaced by materials that are compatible in visual qualities but not necessarily in material although replacement in the same material is ideal but recognizes that it's not always possible. That is in Secretary Standards #6, *Repair Rather Than Replace*.

**A Starr:** So your point being, Anna, that even the Secretary of Interior recognizes that modern materials sometimes are.....

**A Eddings:** can be used, yes.

**Chair John:** do we have a motion?

**E Gavaghan:** I make a motion to approve the – how do you say that?

**A Starr:** motion to approve as submitted for the garage door.

**E Gavaghan:** for the garage door.

**R Kaplan:** I'll second that. But I would like to add some qualifications if that – or comments – for the reason. But I'm not the one who made the motion. Can I do that?

**Chair John:** yes.

**R Kaplan:** because it is new construction, because of the distance from the street and what will be apparent to the public from the public right-of-way, because of the design, not just the material, that for me is crucial. And the fact that it does combine the use of wood with the steel underlayment would be part of the reason to recommend approval.

**E Gavaghan:** can I make another comment? Is that appropriate? I think that these types of things are going to keep coming up for us and I think that it is important for us to look at the Guidelines and to take into account some of these new materials so that we do not necessarily have to have debate and to have a definitive answer of whether we are going to accept those or not accept them.

**C Brewer:** can I make a comment? Just as...I agree with what you are saying but I think that the history of what we have done has been pretty straight forward in approving wood garages and so in my mind that leaves the room for debate out of the picture. Even though we have been talking about this for 20 – 30 minutes. That's where it is clear, in my mind, and as long as there is a product available then we don't need to accommodate a new material unless there is not that product available.

**Motion** by E Gavaghan for approval as submitted; **Second** R Kaplan. The motion failed with a vote of 3 to 3. Chair John, G Roberson and C Brewer voting against.

*Jolana McCart, Recording Secretary*  
5-17-18