



Legislation Text

File #: O-1617-8, **Version:** 1

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE O-1617-8 UPON SECOND AND FINAL READING: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AMENDING SECTION 460 OF CHAPTER 22 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF NORMAN SO AS TO GRANT HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION TO A PORTION OF SOUTHRIDGE ADDITION AND CLASSEN-MILLER ADDITION, CLEVELAND COUNTY, OKLAHOMA; AND PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY THEREOF. (GENERALLY LOCATED BETWEEN MACY AVENUE ON THE NORTH, SHAWNEE STREET ON THE SOUTH, CLASSEN BOULEVARD ON THE WEST, AND OKLAHOMA AVENUE ON THE EAST)

BACKGROUND: The proposed Southridge Historic District is located approximately one mile south of downtown Norman and one quarter mile east of OU campus along Classen Boulevard. See attached Map "A".

Neighbors within the proposed Southridge Historic District 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.

The neighborhood pursuit of historic designation began several years ago with a series of meetings between the then Historic Preservation Officer, Susan Atkinson, and a group of Southridge neighborhood leaders who were concerned about preservation of their historic neighborhood. At the request of the neighborhood, the City of Norman in September of 2014, contracted with a historic consultant to perform a Historic Intensive Level Survey of the area 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. With this report, the interested Southridge neighborhood leaders began the process to obtain local historic district designation by seeking the support of property owners in the surveyed area. In July 2016, the neighborhood leaders from Southridge 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. With the required steps completed, the application for Southridge Historic District Overlay Designation was 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 Southridge Historic District is a residential neighborhood generally located between Macy Street on the north, Shawnee Street on the south, Classen Boulevard on the west and Oklahoma Avenue on the east and contains 103 parcels. The Zoning Ordinance requires the owners of at least 51% of the land area to present a petition in support in order to request Historic District Overlay designation. The submitted application for the proposed Southridge Historic District has owners representing 77.9% of the land area in support of the Historic District Designation as shown on Map "C". Eighty-two of the parcels signed in support while 21 parcels did not sign the petition. Sixty-one parcels or 62.3% of the 103 parcels of the proposed historic district land area contain historically contributing structures as shown on Map "D".

Description of Neighborhood and Architecture

The proposed Southridge Historic District is comprised of 91 lots from the Southridge Addition and 12 lots from the Classen-Miller Addition. Though two different plats, the structures on Macy Street that are part of the Classen-Miller Addition were included in both the Southridge survey area and in the currently proposed Southridge Historic District since the lots are located along Macy Street and are contiguous with the rest of the Southridge Neighborhood. It should be noted that a majority of the houses in the Classen-Miller Addition located on Macy Street as well as the University Falls Apartments (originally named H.M. Murray Apartments) located on Classen Boulevard are of similar style and date of construction as the remaining Southridge Neighborhood.

The Southridge Neighborhood 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. Southridge construction spanned four decades and is the only neighborhood in Norman to consistently see construction during the 1930s. 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. According to the 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey Report, the proposed Southridge Historic District contains one of the only privately built multi-family structures to be constructed during World War II in Norman. It fulfilled some of the much-needed housing demand created by the opening of U.S. Naval training facilities in Norman which flooded the town with many military personnel as well as their families.

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

“The majority of houses in the Southridge neighborhood are single family homes, although there are a couple of multiple family residences, including 1604-1608-1610 Classen Boulevard and 1320-1320 ½ Oklahoma Avenue. Most notable of the multiple family residences are the three large apartment buildings comprising the H.M. Murray Company Apartments Historic District. Although maintaining the overall residential character of the neighborhood, the H.M. Murray Company Apartments are noticeably larger than the typical residential buildings in the neighborhood. Clearly arranged in a complex, the H.M. Murray Company Apartments also share a clear association that is particular to the compound.”

“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 Classical 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.

Period of Significance:

The 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey determined the period of significance for the Southridge Neighborhood to be 1922 to 1950, based upon the beginning and the conclusion of significant construction activity in the neighborhood.

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 proposed Southridge Historic Overlay District, the report shows 61 of those parcels contain contributing structures. This gives the proposed district a 59% contribution rate by parcel. It should be noted that to be nominated to the National Registry of Historic Places requires at least a contribution rate of 56%.

A. Historic/Cultural Significance of the Southridge Neighborhood

The 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey describes the historic/cultural significance as follows (excerpt):

“The Southridge Addition Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its community planning and development significance. The addition represents a distinguishable entity which contributed to Norman’s unique evolution as a University City. Additionally, the district has architectural significance as a good representation of popular

architectural styles during the middle decades of the twentieth century. The specific areas of significance for the Southridge Addition Historic District are architecture and community planning and development.”

The proposed Southridge Historic District played a crucial role in Norman in supplying housing needs for both University students and military personnel over the period of 1922 to 1950. Many community leaders, university professors, staff and students have resided in the Southridge Neighborhood over the decades. Today the proposed Southridge Historic District, due to its proximity to both Downtown Norman and the University of Oklahoma, the high degree of well-maintained houses and its historic character is still a much sought-after neighborhood in Norman.

B. Historic Designation Criteria

At the September 6, 2016 Historic District Commission Meeting, the Commission utilized a set of criteria listed in Section 429.3.6 (k), of the Zoning Ordinance to determine the eligibility of the proposed historic district. This section requires that the proposed historic district contain at least one of the attributes from the three categories listed in that section. The 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey and staff analysis indicated that the proposed Southridge Historic District meets the criteria cited below. The Historic District Commission, at their meeting of September 6, 2016, unanimously recommended the approval of Ordinance designating the Southridge Historic District since it met the below listed criteria for historic district designation. Staff comments regarding the cited criteria provided to the Historic District Commission are provided below.

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 earlier in this report, 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. The report also highlights the housing role that the Southridge Neighborhood played during World War II with the erection of one of the only privately built apartment complexes constructed during the war years. The H.M. Murray Apartments were built in 1943 to house military associated workers and personnel. The proposed Southridge Historic District has significant character, interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of the Norman.

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

Staff Comment: The proposed Southridge Historic District exemplifies the cultural, economic, social and historic heritage of the Norman community from 1920s to 1950.

The 2014 Southridge Neighborhood Intensive Level Survey outlines the continuous role that the neighborhood played in providing housing as the city grew during the 1920s, '30s, and '40s 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 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 the Southridge Addition include: Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Classical Revival and Modern Movement’s Minimal Traditional.

CONCLUSION: While the addition of another historic district to the City of Norman is an asset to Norman, it should be noted that if the proposed Southridge Historic District is approved that the City will be providing resources to regulate and preserve an additional 103 structures. Currently, the City of Norman provides preservation regulation resources for 269 structures in the Chautauqua Historic District and the 207 in the Miller Historic District. As interest in residing in historic districts has increased in recent years so has the number of requests for modifications to the properties and structures in those districts. In the last two years, there have been 47 Certificate of Appropriateness requests processed by the Department for the two current historic districts. The addition of a third historic district will draw upon the resources of the current staff, which includes one planner and one administrative assistant. Staff anticipates with the addition of Southridge Historic District, there will be additional Certificate of Appropriateness requests made by the new district's residents for modifications to the structures and property which will be processed by staff for review by the Historic District Commission.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff analysis of the criteria indicates that the proposed Southridge Historic District is an appropriate historic district boundary. The Historic District Commission, at their meeting of September 6, 2016, unanimously recommended the approval of Ordinance O-1617-8, designating the Southridge Historic District since it met the above listed criteria for historic district designation. The Planning Commission, at their meeting of September 8, 2016, unanimously recommended adoption of Ordinance O-1617-8, on a vote of 7-0.